University of Alberta

Searching Citizenship:
Social Studies and the Tensions of Teaching

by

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©

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Abstract

A crisis of silence abounds in the teaching and learning of social studies, and it is the aim of this research to begin to dispel the crisis through the persistent possibility of opening up understandings of citizenship, culture and gender in social studies, to move beyond the masculinzed and falsely universalistic knowledge upon which social studies has been created, to unsettle the deep language of citizenship, and ultimately to honour the multi-layered narratives of teaching in a continual search for meanings.

Informed by philosophical hermeneutics and feminist theory, and using feminism as a critical hermeneutic, this research honours the voices and experiences of teachers who are invested with the task of educating citizens in a world that is filled with contradictions, complexities, inequities, and uncertainties. Conversations with five classroom teachers reveal how teaching has been shaped by tradition but also how we might learn through the messiness of everyday talk, opening up new possibilities for understanding and creating the conditions through which knowledge may be transformed. The conversations reflect a sustained commitment to questions rather than answers, to the open and provisional character of research, and to the significance of both what is spoken and what remains unsaid.

Through this research it became clear that perplexing difficulties, or aporias, emerged in relation to questions of citizenship, culture and gender. While each of the research participants spoke about the possibilities of educating for citizenship, they also acknowledged the inherent difficulties in a subject that has historically constructed citizenship as universal and students as the same. Culture too was revealed as an aporia in social studies as each participant acknowledged the quieting or silencing of

culture in the curriculum, but struggled with how to meaningfully address such an understanding in their teaching. Similarly, gender surfaced as a site of tension in teaching social studies, often functioning as the unspeakable. Despite the difficulties these aporias presented for the participants in this study, they create opportunities to move forward through social studies and move social studies forward.

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Chapter 1:
The Question(ing) of
Social Studies

Engaging in this research project has, to a large extent, been about exploring my own lived experiences within social studies education. Through the years, the meaning of social studies has been widely debated by educators and academics and a definitive definition continues to be elusive. It has been identified as a vehicle for cultural transmission, social science and reflective thinking (Barr, Barth and Shermis, 1977) as well as "the integrated study of the social sciences and humanities to promote civic competence" (Task force for Standards of Teaching and Learning in the Social Studies, 1993). Long time social studies educator Geoffrey Milburn (1997) speaks about his own uncertainty as to the meaning of social studies, wondering if it is an umbrella term for a mix of disciplines, including history, geography, political science, etc, a "safe haven for social themes," a set of propositions pertaining to social life over time, or inquiry processes intended to assist students in exploring problems in any realm of study (p. 10). E. Wayne Ross (2001) echoes Milburn's uncertainty regarding the meaning of social studies, suggesting that in the broadest sense, social studies is "the preparation of young people so that they possess the knowledge, skills and values necessary for active participation in society" (p. 20). William B. Stanley (2001) maintains that "social studies remains a field in search of an identity" given its wide and eclectic knowledge base (p. 1), Alan Sears (1997) claims that it is a subject area "mired in confusion" (19) and J.L. Nelson (2001) states that "defining social studies is not an easy task" given its "confounding history, conflicting conceptual ideas, and strong ideological divergence in both political and educational philosophy" (p. 15). These assertions suggest that social studies education remains a subject area in search of itself, and as such, is open to interpretation in highly personal ways. What teachers understand social studies to mean will likely influence their approaches to teaching and the way they interact with prescribed content. Their understandings are the product of their own experiences as students in social studies classrooms, as pre-service teachers preparing to teach social studies, as teachers actively engaged in interpreting the curriculum and teaching students, and ultimately, as individuals living in a particular context at a particular time.

Over the course of this study, I have reflected upon my encounters with and understandings of social studies curriculum, citizenship and classrooms and come to

realize that as teachers, we live in spaces of tension between possibilities and impossibilities; spaces of tension between knowing what social studies might offer students and what it does offer students; spaces of tension as we grapple with prescribed and negotiated experiences. The goals of citizenship central to most social studies curriculum embody these im/possibilities for the teachers who participated in this study. Our many conversations are replete with the tensions we live in as teachers as we attempt to navigate our own ideals, the realities of the curriculum, issues of race, culture and gender, and the goals of citizenship in social studies.

What has become clear throughout my research is that spaces of tension can be productive and that individuals need not be debilitated by what initially appears impossible. Deborah Britzman (2003) reminds us that conflict and confusion "are all crucial to the stuff of understanding and constructing knowledge" (p. 2). Often, the experience of tension or conflict creates opportunities for self-reflection, personal and professional growth, and new understandings of what it means to teach and live the world of social studies. Janet Miller (1993) describes such a phenomena thus:

> Those various personal as well as "official" representations of knowledge can intersect in ways that both reflect *and* continually reconstruct the processes, contents, and contexts of teaching and learning (p. 47).

For Miller, the representation of knowledge is not static; rather, knowledge and understanding are continually constructed as they are lived by individuals. My own historically effected consciousness (Gadamer, 1988) conditions how I, as a teacher, grapple with official curriculum knowledge, come to understand it and share this knowledge with students. Because of this, and as part of my own self-reflective processes, in the section that follows I chronicle my own interactions with socials studies education as a young girl and later as a woman teaching a subject that seems to support a predominantly male narrative of the world (Crocco, 2001; Sears, 2003).

Wandering (wondering) About Social Studies

When I was a young girl I remember listening attentively to the stories my grandmother told me of the suffrage movement, tea with Nellie McClung, surviving the depression, and raising a family in the post-war era. She spoke about the victory that women had achieved in being declared "persons" under the law, and in my five-year old mind, I

wondered what women had been before they were "persons". My grandmother's stories were reminders of the role that many women had played in shaping Canadian society and the importance of their actions both at home and in the community. For my fifth birthday, my mother gave me a book in celebration of International Women's year, 1975, which chronicled the narratives of both remarkable and ordinary women. I became familiar with the names and stories of the women found within its pages, and this book remains in my collection today.

When I started school, I expected I would continue to learn about the experiences of women in my social studies lessons just as I had learned about them from my grandmother, mother, and the books they shared with me. But this was not to be and I was troubled. But wanting to be a good student and please my teachers, I hid my distress. I found myself living in a space of tension between what I had been taught at home and what I was being taught at school; what I did believe and what I should believe. For a young girl, this was significant confusion to grapple with, and I am not sure that I ever really came to understand it. Instead, it was easier to shut down, to shut out the tension and confusion and accept the "official" knowledge of schooling. Britzman (2003) describes such a response as the "crisis of quietism" in education, brought on by "a fear of questioning knowledge" (p.9). So while I had difficulty relating to the Fathers of Confederation, I accepted the importance of their contributions to Canadian society out of a fear that doing otherwise would position me as deviant or delinquent when I so desperately longed for the approval and praise of my teachers.

In these social studies classrooms of my youth, we did not talk about the absence of women from our lessons, from the worlds of politics or economics. In fact, the "social" in social studies is a misnomer in so far as it privileges the public sphere of politics and economics at the expense of communal and family living (Crocco, 2001). The "invisibility" of women in social studies was reinforced through the creation of this artificial dichotomy between public and private spaces that shaped classroom conversations and textbook descriptions. What I learned early on in my social studies classes was that as a girl, the contributions I could make to the world were far fewer and of less importance than those of the boys in my class. Feminist scholar Jane Bernard-Powers (1995) speaks about a similar experience as a young girl, having read books that chronicled the lives of girls and women, but reading social studies textbooks in

which "women, notable or otherwise, separately or in relation with men, were virtually invisible" (p. 191). Because of this, Bernard-Powers questioned her own sense of identity in relation to social studies, just as I questioned my own sense of citizenship in relation to the boys in my class. I came to believe that I was not a "citizen" in the same way as the boys were. After all, girls grew up to be women who were barely visible in the worlds of politics and economics (Stone, 1996).

While I struggled with the absence of women in my social studies lessons, it did not occur to me as a white child in a middle class home, that students who were not white or middle class would have even greater struggles seeing themselves reflected in the lessons of social studies. We rarely learned about people of colour, and when we did, they were often constructed in ways that suggested it was the responsibility of white society to care for these "less fortunates". For example, I remember a lesson on the underground railway, and learning how many Nova Scotians opened their homes to African-Americans fleeing slavery. It was the contributions of the white people of Nova Scotia that were celebrated in this context, rather than the courage and fortitude of African-Americans. Similarly, a lesson on Japanese Internment focussed on the assistance of white people in the interior of British Columbia to Japanese people living in re-location camps.

Over the years, particular recollections of social studies have been entrenched in my memory. I remember being in grade five when a drama troop came to our school to involve students in a recreation of the Riel Rebellion. Each of us was to take on the role of an assigned character in an enacted dramatization of the Rebellion. My character was a man named Baptiste Lagimodière, described as a Metis farmer. At first it bothered me that I was to portray a man. But since all the girls were playing male characters, I supposed that there were no female roles to play, that French and Native women must not have been involved in this rebellion –they must have been sent away to safety. While I was bothered by having to play a male, it did not occur to me to trouble having to portray a different cultural perspective as well. Culture was so far removed from the context of my social studies classes that it remained invisible and silent. The Riel Rebellion was never discussed in terms of the clash of cultures. Rather, it was presented as a struggle for land. By grade 5, I had become quite learned at suppressing

my concerns around issues of gender, so I did not ask why I had to be a man, and no explanation was offered.

It was not until the ninth grade that I found the courage to speak up about what I believe had been left out of social studies content. I am not sure where this courage came from, and why it had taken so many years to show itself. Perhaps I had been pushed to a point where I could no longer remain silent, years of frustration bubbling to the surface. Or perhaps it was a combination of adolescent hormones and the need to challenge authority. Regardless, it was a turning point for me as a student and as a future educator.

We were in the throes of learning about the Russian Revolution and our teacher had been lecturing about such historical figures as Rasputin, Czar Nicholas, and Vladimir Lenin. The Czarina Alexandra was mentioned, but only in the context of being duped by Rasputin, and aside from her, no mention was made of women. It was as if there were no "ordinary" women in Russia at the time of revolution, that women were not participating in political spaces and were thus non-citizens. Somehow, somewhere, I found the courage to speak out and raised my hand to inquire about the invisibility of women during to the Russian Revolution. But rather than answering my question with a thoughtful and sensitive response, my teacher just smiled, shrugged and shook his head. His actions told me, more than words ever could, what kind of value was bestowed upon the historical experiences and contributions of women.

In this classroom, there was a lack of critical analysis at play that attempted to understand "how history operates as a site of the production of gender knowledge" (Scott,1995, p.10). Not speaking about the women of the Russian Revolution reproduced cultural assumptions around gender in which women are thought to be secondary characters in historical drama separated from the public realm by virtue of their reproductive capacities and their inherent fragility. For women, the experiences of citizenship seemed limited to private domains. The duality between public and private spaces was reinforced in social studies content that defined *woman* in terms of *man* (Stone, 1996). This moment has stayed with me for all these years and I have often wondered whether my teacher was simply teaching the Russian Revolution as he had been taught.

Social studies educator and feminist scholar Jean Anyon (1983, p. 37) suggests that such a phenomena, teaching as we have been taught, is a result of the ideologies contained in curriculum content, which "misrepresent and conceal inequalities in the structure of relationships on which social and cultural power is based." Anyon understands ideology as a means of interpreting reality, which attempts to pass itself off as objective, but which is "demonstrably partial" (p. 37). Students are encouraged to interpret reality in a seemingly objective way, when actually the reality that they encounter through the curriculum is anything but objective. In this way, a dominant narrative and certain cultural "truths" are passed from generation to generation, sustaining the essence of the subject, insulating it from meaningful change. A failure to reflect critically on curriculum content serves this purpose well. Had this teacher taken the time to carefully consider my question, his response to me might have been different. However, I am not suggesting that he was an active co-conspirator in ideological reproduction. Rather, in the words of Elizabeth Minnich (1990, p.32):

> *The principles that require and justify the exclusion of women, and the results of those principles appearing throughout the complex artifices of knowledge and culture, are so locked into the dominant meaning system that it has for a very long time been utterly irrelevant whether or not any particular person intended to exclude women* (emphasis in original text).

It is this dominant meaning system that shapes curriculum and the way that teachers tend to read it. In this respect, many teachers are unconscious participants in the reproduction of dominant ideologies rather than wilful accomplices.

More recently, as a doctoral student, I had a conversation with a group of pre-service teachers about the importance of including myriad perspectives and voices in social studies as a way of challenging the insularity of its content. I made specific reference to the absence of women's voices in social studies curriculum in an effort to reinforce the previous point. At that moment, one of my students, who happened to be male, shared with the class that he would not be deviating from the curriculum, nor would he be seeking information that *does not exist.* He maintained that if women had been "doing anything important" historically, it would have undoubtedly found its way into the curriculum. At that moment, I felt anger toward my student for uttering such dismissive comments. But upon reflection I think it might have been unfair of me to expect any other response than the one he offered. In many ways, the words of this student mirror

the smile and shrug my grade nine teacher offered in response to my questions about the women of the Russian Revolution. The implicit message seems to be that what warrants curricular inclusion is what is "important". One might deduce that information not finding its way into the curriculum is of little or no importance.

Another encounter, this time with a teaching colleague who was participating with me and others in a curriculum discussion-group reinforces this message. The individual did not find the relative absence of non-dominant histories in the proposed Alberta Program of Studies problematic. He pointed out that there was only a finite amount of space in the curriculum for history instruction and indicated that decisions were made based upon the importance of the material. This way of thinking justifies the exclusion of "other" voices and experiences from the curriculum. It is a reflection of larger cultural ideologies (Apple & King, 1977) that attempt to suffocate disparate voices and find in the curriculum a convenient way of doing so. Of course decisions must be made about what to include in the curriculum, and as my colleague so aptly pointed out, these decisions are caught up in a hierarchy of knowledge. Britzman (2003) speaks about this phenomena as resulting in part from the compartmentalization of knowledge that characterizes most school subjects. She makes the following observation about compartmentalization:

> [it] defines the limits of relevancy; it brackets our definitions of context and content, and imposes measures of credibility that determine what we accept and reject as true and as false. The compartmentalization of knowledge stipulates the boundaries of discourse – what is spoken and what remains unsaid – and provides the borders of interpretation ...[compartmentalization] abstract[s] knowledge from its socio-cultural roots and political consequences, and decontextualiz[es] knowledge and skills from their practical existence...When knowledge is severed from its socio-cultural context, all the qualities of contingency, authorship, and chronology that realize knowledge in the first place are lost (pp. 51-52).

For Britzman, compartmentalizing knowledge attempts to protect it from interrogation or critique. Knowledge is entrenched in the curriculum of social studies, divorced from its socio-cultural roots, universalized and legitimized. Like Britzman, Minnich (1990) worries that the tendency to compartmentalize knowledge avoids "consideration of context and consequence" (p.91), affirming the canonization of certain topics of study in school curricula. The scope of the curriculum in social studies and the reality of teaching that curriculum to students would seem to legitimize, in the minds of many educators, the

need to include "only what is important" without careful consideration of how importance is constructed, understood, and conferred.

My experiences with the social studies curriculum lead me to believe that opposing forces are at play. On one hand there is an acknowledgement that social studies curriculum cannot contain an infinite amount of material, so certain voices are necessarily excluded. On the other, I have encountered the desire to stretch the scope of the curriculum only in so far as this stretching enhances the already entrenched traditions of knowledge. We can always add more content as long as it is more of the same, compartmentalized and divorced from its socio-cultural roots. One example of this tendency is found in the grade 12 social studies program in Alberta, part of which emphasizes an examination of global confrontation in the 20th and 21st centuries (Alberta Program of Studies, 2000). I have frequently listened to grade 12 social studies teachers complain that the more conflicts there are in a given year, the more they are expected to teach their students. In the last 10 years the content of Social 30 in Alberta has expanded to include discussions of the war in Yugoslavia, the genocide in Rwanda, the Persian Gulf War, the various civil wars in the former Soviet Union, and now, the war in Iraq. Arguably these are important events to discuss with students. However, no content was removed to make room for these topics, so it appears possible to expand the information included in the curriculum in so far as it 'fits' with existing topics and themes. While this reflects the need to be up to date in social studies and the pressures of including current events, it continues to reflect the inclusion of content that 'fits'. Politics, economics and conflict continue to reflect conventional knowledge in social studies and the limits of this knowledge seem to curb the inclusion of any content perceived to be contrary to the essence of social studies.

Feminist scholar Iris Marion Young (1993) argues that when certain groups enjoy greater power, particularly economic and political power, their ways of thinking and their cultural assumptions will become the norm, biasing the standards of inclusion governing social, political and economic institutions (p.133). Like Minnich (1990), and Anyon (1983), Young identifies the role that ideologies have played in cultural reproduction. I see now that the responses of my teacher, of my student, and of my colleague are products of the way in which certain ways of thinking and certain cultural assumptions have become the norm and are implicated in the crafting of social studies content. And given this

normative process, it is not surprising that the voices and experiences of women and other ethno-cultural minorities remain outside the narrative of social studies.

Going Somewhere

These musings around my memories of social studies situate me within my research and attempt to expose my own prejudices or fore-structures of understanding (Smits, 1997). While they reveal my understanding of social studies based upon my experiences with it, these musings are only a very preliminary part of my journey into social studies, for they reflect a basic understanding of some of the challenges posed by the subject. Yes, social studies curriculum does not include very many voices outside the dominant narrative. Yes, women do not have equal representation with men in social studies curriculum and textbooks. Education feminists have long been pointing out these concerns through research that has identified gender bias in classroom activities, curricular content, and prescribed learning resources (Ayim & Houston, 1996; Gaskell & McLaren, 1992; Sadker, Sadker & Klein, 1991; Scott, 1980). My memories of social studies and my experiences as a teacher reinforce an already well-established concern amongst many educators and academics that the curriculum is not a neutral or objective construction (Apple, 1996; Ellsworth, 1994; Giroux, 1998; Ghosh, 1996; Grumet & Stone, 2000; Miller, 1993; Roland-Martin, 1995).

William Irwin Thompson (1987, p.9) claims " 'facts' can become superstitious idols with which an imperial power strives to wipe out a traditional culture." In the case of social studies, Thompson's assertion points out how a single version of the past can be presented as 'truth,' effacing other versions and perspectives by denying them an opportunity to be heard. The discipline becomes the imperial power through which other cultures disappear. David Jardine (2000) writes about the way in which implicit Enlightenment images of language, understanding, and reasonability reproduce the conditions of replacing living systems with a single voice in science (p.82). He suggests that this is a form of colonialism. There is little difference between what Jardine is suggesting and what Thompson maintains. The terms they use may be different but the message is the same – it speaks of cultural hegemony and the need to sustain this hegemony through the creation of a normalizing truth.

Implicit in both Thompson and Jardine's reflections is the complexity surrounding the construction of truth. For Jardine truth comes to be reflected through a "single voice" and Thompson sees 'facts' as reflections of truth. Whether we find "truth" in a single voice or a series of facts is less important than how certain "truths" are given priority so as to become "colonizers." Thus, it is difficult to separate discussions of truth from discussions of curriculum, for it is partly through curriculum that we come to "truth." In social studies, students and teachers are implicitly invited to embrace a single version or "truth" of the past, often at the expense of other rich and diverse experiences (Bernard-Powers, 1995; Noddings, 1992; Scott, 1999; Sleeter & Grant, 1991; Tetrault, 2001).

Continuing my Search

I cannot bring myself to accept that in history we find a single truth; history is much too complex to ever imagine that we will find a definitive truth in it. What I do believe in is a series of "truths" or, what I prefer to name as understandings that stem from a multitude of experiences, locations, voices, and stories. Meaning is fluid, always being constructed and reconstructed through our own and other's understandings and through the meeting of these understandings. So it is not a single truth that we should seek, but an aggregation of understandings and meanings. However, as students and teachers encounter the prescribed curriculum of social studies, they are often reading a single truth, a limited understanding of the past and the present, one in which issues of race, culture, and gender struggle in the silence that envelopes them.

So it becomes imperative, in the context of my research, to embark on a search for a deeper understanding of what it is about social studies that is questionable, that prevents any dramatic shift away from the teaching of a dominant narrative. Based upon my own observations and past conversations with teachers, there appears to be a sense that with the removal of obvious examples of sexism and racism, controlling bias by removing such egregious examples from curricular documents and textbooks, race, culture and gender cease to be issues in social studies curriculum. Instead, the focus has shifted to discussions of scope and sequence where changes to the content of social studies do not necessarily reflect critical engagement with the knowledge embedded in the subject or the goals that drive the subject. The feeling that there is no longer cause for concern in social studies negates any need for deep and sustained

reflection around or within the discipline. This in turn protects social studies and its traditions from significant change.

Cameron McCarthy (1993; 1998) understands curriculum as a tool for the production and circulation of commonsense meanings, whereby all members of a society are expected to think about things in a particular way. They become our "cultural truths." Social Studies curriculum is implicated in the production and perpetuation of commonsense meanings, not only through the content of the subject, but through the goals and objectives that drive it, and the definitions that inform it. In particular, citizenship education, as a central goal of social studies, is a powerful exemplar of commonsense meaning insofar as citizenship is understood to be universal. While Sears (1997) argues that citizenship is a contested concept, this contestation is not reflected in the normative liberal democratic understandings of citizenship embedded in most social studies curriculum (Stone, 1996). Steeped in a discourse of rights and duties, liberal conceptions of citizenship imply that all individuals in a democratic state are protected regardless of social class, gender, race, ethnicity, and that the rights of citizenship are universally bestowed. However, feminist scholars like Carole Pateman (1989), Nira Yuval-Davis (1997, 1999), Ruth Lister (1997a, 1997b), Madeleine Arnot (1997, 1999, 2001) and Rian Voet (1998) emphasize that liberal democratic citizenship is infused with "false universalism" since not all citizens have historically enjoyed the same rights or access to political participation and not all citizens enjoy equality in contemporary society. More attention is devoted to this discussion in the chapter that follows.

Opening up the Question(s)

My initial musings reflect the way in which I have been caught up in my own commonsense meanings. I have been thinking about social studies in a particular way, within a particular framework, with my own particular prejudices. My energies seem to have been directed at further identification of gender biases inherent in the subject, a continued focus for feminists in the last several years (Anyon, 1979; Coulter, 1989; Farganis, 1989; Hahn, 1996; McLeod & Silverman, 1973; Noddings, 1992; Sadker & Sadker, 1988, Tetreault, 1986). For a very long time, I have found myself asking the same questions of social studies and directing my energies at seeking definitive answers to these questions. I did not allow space for new questions to emerge and stay open through the process of inquiry. In keeping with existing conceptions of scholarship, I felt

I needed to come to some sort of conclusion even if doing so meant shutting down the possibilities for further reflection and critique. In many respects, this was safe and comfortable and familiar. Returning to the insights offered by Britzman (2003), I am reminded that the denial and repression of uncertainty does nothing to move us forward as teachers, as learners, and as individuals attempting to make sense of our own lived experiences. Instead, it allows us to sit in a comfortable place, teach our classes in a way that does not cause us or our students anxiety, interpret the curriculum within our own commonsense assumptions, and always have the appropriate answers and responses readily at hand.

Now, I find myself contemplating different questions, difficult questions, questions that are unanswerable but that I am compelled to ask in my own journey to understanding. I am less concerned with why biases continue to permeate social studies curriculum and textbooks and am more concerned with the need to be aware of biases and the broader perspectives that inform them. I am less interested in the existence of such biases and more interested with how individual teachers and students make sense of these biases and are made sense of by these biases. I am less interested in why it has it been so difficult to create a social studies curriculum that is genuinely inclusive and more interested in exploring teachers' understandings of what it means to teach social studies to students who are not all the same. I am less concerned with defining what is meant by citizenship education in social studies, and more concerned with opening up understandings of citizenship for teachers and students. And finally, I find myself needing to explore, in light of my own experiences with social studies, why I have been drawn to it so fully and completely.

Because of this, my research involves an opening up of the question of teaching social studies and an exploration of what is questionable about teaching social studies. That is, what do teachers question in their own teaching of social studies and what do they question in terms of the content and structure of social studies and its delivery in their particular teaching locations and contexts. It is not my intent through this research to focus only on what is "wrong" with social studies, but it is my intent to explore the possibilities that social studies offers as it is right now, not as it might be or ought to be (Minnich, 1990).

The intent of my research is hermeneutic insofar as it seeks to understand how teachers presently interpret and explore the possibilities for change within the social studies tradition. It is hermeneutic as it seeks to understand the force of tradition in both the subject being taught and in the way in which the subject is taught, and as it explores the meanings and possibilities of social studies (Gadamer, 1988). Shaun Gallagher (1992) suggests that we cannot escape traditions and the preconceptions that they foster, but that we can explicate the preconceptions that are built into interpretation in order to see how the past operates in the present. What he is referring to is coming to an awareness of what structures our understandings, and in the case of this study, what understandings structure the teaching of social studies and citizenship education. Understanding, Jardine (1998) reminds us, is something that we are already always involved in. Thus, my earlier autobiographical writing reveals to some degree, how my own understandings of social studies have been structured by my lived experiences. Yet I must remain open to the possibilities of new understandings emerging through an ongoing process of reflection, interpretation and dialogue. David Smith (1991) suggests that understanding, interpretation, and meaningfulness are "rooted, hermeneutically speaking, in a sense of the dialogical, intersubjective, and conversational nature of human experience" (p. 192). With this in mind, hermeneutics is a fitting orientation, particularly as it attempts to keep the questions of inquiry open and understanding dynamic. A more in-depth discussion of hermeneutics as it informs my research is located in Chapters 3 and 4.

Research as Meaning(full)

Long time social studies educator Ian Wright (2003) states "merely finding out how people define citizenship education will not tell us how their definitions have made, or do make, a difference in their lives", he goes on to suggest that hermeneutic methodologies offer the possibility for "ascertaining" how citizenship education "is embedded in the personal and social practices of people, how it is related to their histories, their status in society, their beliefs, and their values" (p. 2). While I agree with much of what Wright says in terms of the need to do more than simply define citizenship education, his discussion stops short of really opening up the question of citizenship, particularly in the context of social studies education. Rather than "ascertaining" (learning with certainty) how citizenship is embedded in practice and related to history and status, we need to explore the deep uncertainties that are at the heart of citizenship but often go unspoken.

Hermeneutics is not about the search for certainty, but is about the search for deeper understandings and the opening up of possibilities. What makes this study most meaningful is that it attempts to do just that, open up dialogic understandings of citizenship education through an exploration of what is questionable about social studies. Race, culture, gender, power, privilege, voice, representation, commonsense meanings, weave their way in and out of our conversations as I explore, with the teachers in this study, our own uncertainties and tensions teaching social studies informed by the goals of citizenship education . For it is from these spaces of uncertainty and tension that we are able to move forward through social studies and move social studies forward.

Chapter 2:
As Knowledge is Conceived
In Social Studies

Constructing Curriculum

Madeleine Grumet and Lynda Stone (2000) describe curriculum in terms of everyday life. They view it as "a gathering of social practices, of relationships, events, coming and goings, inscriptions and erasures (p. 191)." Certainly for students in schools, day-to-day activities are shaped by both the implicit and explicit curriculums that they encounter. Whether it is the learning that happens in the classroom or the learning that occurs in the hallway, students cannot separate themselves from curriculum. However, it is the latter part of Stone and Grumet's statement that is foremost to my discussion of citizenship, culture and gender in curricula, for social studies, as I have already maintained, is about making invisible that which does not enhance an already inscribed knowledge, or canon. The curriculum reflects certain ideas pertaining to citizenship which themselves are reflections of larger social and cultural values and practices. Culture in this context may be understood as:

> A network of meaning to which certain people have access and from which they draw to communicate with and recognize one another ... culture can entail very thick and overlapping networks of taken-for-granted elements through which meaningful interactions develop and grow. A shared written and oral language, shared norms about marriage, child rearing, family membership and obligations, and land use, and shared understandings about the way we should interact with members of other groups and with nature (Feinberg, 1998, p.4).

Culture is everywhere present in our lives and certainly informs the construction of social studies curriculum. Thus, the content and organization of the curriculum is not impartial nor is it random (Apple, 1996; Ellsworth, 1994; Ghosh & Abdi, 2004; Roland-Martin, 1998). The curriculum contains the 'commonsense' meanings that Cameron McCarthy (1993; 1998) refers to, the norms that Iris Marion Young (1993) speaks about, and what Bernard Williams (1985) describes as 'thick' vocabulary. For Williams, 'thick' vocabulary emerges from the historical traditions of intellectual culture, filled with the echoes of particular kinds of historical experiences and practices, which then come to justify certain practices and norms. Social studies has not been immune to such commonsense meanings, norms, or 'thick' vocabulary insofar as it is imbued with what I refer to as a the

deep language of curriculum and of citizenship, predicated upon the historical traditions of dominant cultural groups and constituted by certain rules, standards and norms implicit in its content.

According to Edward Said (1993), "society and culture has been the heterogeneous product of heterogeneous people in an enormous variety of cultures, traditions, and situations" (p.311). Given the cultural diversity of North American schools, it would seem reasonable that over time curriculum, and especially social studies curriculum, would come to reflect the heterogeneity of society. However, this has not been the case (Cherryholmes, 1992; Noddings, 1992 & 2001; Ross, 2001; Scott, 1999; Sleeter & Grant, 1991; Vinson, 2001). Social studies by its very definition is a cultural construction. When it evolved as a subject area, it did so partly in response to a new cultural pluralism resulting from massive immigration of non western-Europeans. It was hoped that through social studies instruction, the children of these immigrant families would be assimilated into dominant culture and become "good" citizens similar to the children of the dominant group who were thought to already be "good citizens" by virtue of their cultural location. (Osborne, 1997; Richardson, 2002).

Despite Said's (1993) reminder of the existence and reality of cultural diversity, social studies curriculum has historically paid little attention to difference. But how was it able to effectively do this? Especially given the changing demographics of the Canadian population as a result of immigration from non-Western European locales. In part, the curriculum's failure to attend to growing cultural diversity is a reflection of the culture embedded in it, the deep language of citizenship in which liberal and civic republican traditions are central. These traditions have not only informed notions of "good" citizenship in social studies, they continue to be embedded in understandings of citizenship as universal where abilities to engage as citizens are not affected by particular locations of gender and culture, class and race.

Aren't We All Citizens? Digging up the Seeds of Citizenship

Briefly, British theorist T. H. Marshall (1950) defines citizenship as *full* membership in a community. It is his belief that citizenship is a status of universal nature bestowed upon individuals in whom difference is rendered invisible by virtue of the rights and duties associated with citizenship. Marshall's sense of the entitlements of citizenship is

grounded in liberal theories that embrace a rights discourse. Citizenship becomes a legal status through identification and protection of the rights that an individual holds within the state (Lister, 1997b; Carter & Stokes, 1998). Theoretically, all individuals have universal access to these rights by virtue of their membership in a state and it is the state's job to protect its citizens from injustice. Feminist theorist Rian Voet (1998) suggests that liberal theories of citizenship

> ...tell us that equal and full citizenship for all adults born within the territory of the state already exists. It tells us that with the disappearance of feudalism and slavery, and the inclusion of all adults in suffrage, political inequality has also been eliminated. After all, as far as public life is concerned, all members of western societies have an equal status and possess equal rights (p. 1).

Notwithstanding the lofty heights liberal definitions of citizenship have aspired to, Voet (1998) is critical of them because while citizenship may be universal in theory, it has not been universal in practice. Stone and Grumet (2000) use the words "inscriptions and erasures" to describe the way curriculum operates, and by extension, citizenship which has been understood as signalling both inclusion and exclusion (Gordon, Holland and Lahelma, 2000). Rather than being universal, citizenship has historically been withheld or revoked from individuals who are thought to be "different" or unworthy of membership in the polis. One need only look to the examples of Japanese Internment in Canada and the United States during the Second World War or the Armenian genocide by the Turks during World War I as evidence of this. History abounds with examples in which women and members of minority groups have been 'created' as marginalized members of a nation and prevented from *full* membership in communities.

For many feminists, there is little difference between civic republican traditions of citizenship and liberal traditions. As I have noted, liberal traditions are steeped in a rights discourse. Civic republicanism, however, is caught up in the discourse of obligation in which individuals are expected to serve the state in a political way so that the common good may be pursued above the personal interests of individual citizens. Political activity functions not as "a means to an end" but an "end in itself" (Lister, 1997a, p. 24). Mary Dietz (1987) describes civic republicanism as participation in the affairs of the community, as "speakers of words and doers of deeds" (p. 13). Thus, there seems to be a more active component to civic republican traditions of citizenship than to liberal traditions. Yet each of these traditions have posed similar challenges for women and members of minority groups who have been excluded from both political participation in

the public realm and the enjoyment of the same civic, political, and legal rights as men. The debate becomes one of semantics. Whether we choose to embrace the discourse of rights or the discourse of obligations, the historical experiences of citizenship for women and members of minority groups in liberal democracies have been exclusionary.

Scepticism about the "universality" of citizenship as espoused by theorists such as Marshall is well articulated by Diane Taylor (1989) who highlights the "failure of citizenship rights vested in liberal democratic institutions to meet the needs of women and racialized groups and the socially and economically marginalized (p.29)." Similarly, Will Kymlicka (1994) wonders whether we can even talk about citizenship "in a society where rights are distributed on the basis of group membership (p. 174)." Both Taylor and Kymlicka stress how liberal democratic citizenship has not lived up to the potential for universality of which Marshall spoke.

Similar doubt abounds amongst feminist socio-political theorists. Jo-anne Dillabough and Madeline Arnot (2000) are vehement in their assertion that the central feature of liberal democracy is the gendered notion of the rational citizen. As it was Aristotle in the third century B.C. who first conceived of the polis or public space as the sight of rational and reasoned dialogue, citizenship as a gendered construct has existed since classical Greece (Arnot, 2002; Lister, 1997a; Pateman, 1989; Stone, 1996). It was the belief of Ancient Greek philosophers that women were too emotional and passionate, and as such should not be permitted access to the polis. Only men, rational by nature, could engage in political activity. Women were not to have a public or civic voice; rather, they were to care for the home, freeing men to engage in civic acts. Confining women to the home because of their emotional and passionate natures (Stone, 1996) creates a citizenship demarcated by gender. It also marks a formal split between public and private spaces, and a formal split between rational and passionate thought. This split is reinforced through the content of social studies with its attention to the public domain and inattention to the private. For example, in the Alberta Program of Studies (2000) students engage in an in-depth study of economic systems in Topic A of the grade 12 curriculum. Much attention is given to the role of paid work in public spaces as central to capitalist systems, while no attention is given to the unpaid work of women in the home as constituting an important economic contribution.

Robin Silbergleid (1997) likens the traditions of liberal democratic citizenship to romance novels through the formers reliance on the sexual contract as a means of perpetuating itself. The characters, particularly women, suggests Silbergleid, are focussed on attaining marriage and reproduction as desirable outcomes of the romances they seek. The men in these fictions epitomize safety and security, not unlike what the nation-state is designed to represent for its citizens. Women must be saved by men and fulfilled through their relationships to them, just as citizens must be protected by the nation and rewarded for their service to it. The narrative fosters "a newly defined bourgeois family with its necessary emphasis on sexual difference and gendered division of labour" (p. 156). Yet discussions of citizenship in education circles often fail to regard citizenship as anything but gender neutral. For Ruth Lister (1997a):

> The ostensible gender neutrality of the term 'citizenship' disguises the gender divisions constructed in its name, both historically and today. For much of history, ancient and modern, women were denied the formal status and rights of citizenship. In ancient Greece, they lived outside citizenship's boundaries, together with slaves (p. 66).

Lister's concern that gender divisions continue to be caught up in citizenship mirror the false universalism of citizenship I discussed earlier. Because we are products of the world in which we live, and because schools have played an integral role in the teaching of citizenship, it is easy for us to forget (if we ever even knew) that some of us do not have the same access to citizenship as others. This is particularly true if acts of citizenship continue to be conceived of and lived only in public spaces. Because schools are liberal democratic entities, and because, as I have already indicated, liberal democracies espouse a false universalism, then we need to begin questioning who is a citizen, how citizenship is constructed and lived in schools, and how it functions in specific subject areas to include and exclude students depending upon their gendered and cultural locations.

Re-constructing Citizenship: Beyond the Traditional Discourse

If we are to engage in a sustained questioning of citizenship as it is lived in schools, and in particular, as it is conceptualized and represented in social studies curriculum, it is necessary to explore other ways of thinking about citizenship beyond the dominant traditions of liberalism and civic republicanism. Unfortunately, in Canada, relatively few educators have focussed their attention on citizenship as a gendered construct and when they have, it has been in the context of schooling generally rather than specific

subject areas (see Arnot & Dillabough, 2000; Strong-Boag, 2003; Sears, 2003). In fact, in his review of research on citizenship education in English Canada, Sears (1996) found a scarcity of research "in almost all of the areas [of citizenship education] reviewed" determining a need for greater inquiry in citizenship education in Canada" (p. 125). Individuals writing about citizenship in the context of social studies tend to keep their discussions within traditional understandings of citizenship without troubling the gendered roots of these traditions in any significant way (see Osborne, 1997; Sears, 1996a & 1996b; Sears, 1997; Sears & Hughes, 1996). It would seem that the false universalism of citizenship continues to permeate academic circles despite the recent scholarship of cultural and feminist socio-political theorists and educators mainly out of Western European countries and the United States (Arnot, 1997; Arnot, 2002; Arnot & Dillabough, 2000; Bickford, 1997; Davies, 2000; Hill Collins, 1999; Lister 1997a & 1997b; Pateman, 1989; Stone, 2000; Yuval-Davis & Werbner, 1999).

Much of this scholarship criticizes current understandings of what is meant by citizenship in the context of nation-states. It worries the liberal democratic rights and duties discourse and points to the way in which the discourse of obligation that characterizes civic republicanism has been used to perpetuate social inequities despite goals of equality embedded in citizenship ideals. It calls for a reconceptualization of how we understand citizenship, who is a citizen, and what it means to be a citizen, especially for individuals who have been denied full citizenship status in liberal democratic states. But perhaps most importantly, it attacks the discourse of universalism, suggesting that it is this very concept that attempts to mask discrimination and racism in liberal democratic states. This reconceptualist scholarship does not end once the attack has been levied, however, as it attempts to provide new ways of thinking about citizenship with a mind to the intersections of race, culture, class and gender.

Considered to be one of the more radical rubrics of a new citizenship, maternal feminists (or women-centred theorists as they are sometimes referred) seize upon the binary opposition of public and private entrenched in liberal traditions of citizenship. They maintain that the private must become the locus for a possible public morality and as a model for the activity of citizenship itself (Dietz, 1998). What maternal feminists are offering is a new conception of citizenship in which the private becomes the most important space for engaging in citizenship. It is only through the superiority of the

private that political consciousness and ethical ways of being may be realized. A pride of place, in the maternal view of citizenship, is granted to women and to 'women's sphere' and citizenship is informed by all the virtues of mothering, including love, attentiveness, compassion and care.

While I can understand what prompted maternal feminists to articulate this vision of citizenship, it is still very much premised upon inequities, although in this case, the inequities are intentionally reversed creating yet another binary in the discourse of citizenship. The critique levelled at liberalism in which citizenship is always lived in public spaces may also be levelled at maternal feminists in their crafting of a new citizenship. Like those they criticize, maternal feminists embrace a false universalism by essentializing the category of women. In suggesting that all women share the same experiences and emotions, they are negating differences between women just as the dominant discourse of citizenship has negated differences between people. While they remind us of the hegemony inherent in privileging acts of citizenship in one space over another, maternal feminists do not productively broaden our understanding of what citizenship might look like if we move away from the dualities of public and private and rational and emotive thought. That said the attention given to the duality between the public and private realms is necessary to any discussion of citizenship that attempts to move beyond the liberal tradition.

Unlike maternal feminists, Susan Bickford (1997) sees liberal traditions of citizenship as lacking connectedness through a focus on individualism. She suggests that there needs to be a move away from the priority of the individual in engaging in citizenship and that through a re-politicizing of identity we may be better able to forge new coalitions to "enact a particular kind of political togetherness, one that is not restricted by established group identity, but not dismissive of it either" (p. 123-124). This in turn will contribute to a new democratic intersubjectivity where anger, responsibility, and courage become the cornerstone of a new political ethic. Arguably, anger may seem to be a counter-productive emotion in the context of citizenship. However, I believe that it has the potential to evoke individual involvement rather than passivity, individual concern rather than apathy. Given the recent discussion in Canada regarding the disengagement of youth in the political system and efforts such as "vote-a-palooza" and "rush the vote", productive anger may be what is needed to re-engage individuals in the political ethos. If

dissent is to remain a cornerstone of democracy, then anger has the potential to inform dissent in a new democratic intersubjectivity.

Bickford attempts to illustrate the value of passion in this new intersubjectivity as both a prolific and necessary requisite to action and connectivity. In this respect, she endeavours to revalue an emotion that has, in liberal traditions of citizenship, been both associated with women and regarded as counterproductive and undesirable because of its 'irrationality.' Whether or not we choose to embrace Bickford's reconceptualization of citizenship, it does offer a useful means of thinking about the role of emotion in citizenship and the possibilities of a new connectivity predicated upon non-categorical identity. Martha Nussbaum (2001) contends that emotions are central to our ability to live as citizens. She suggests that it is what and how we feel more so than what we know that shapes our perceptions of the world. For Nussbaum, emotions are forms of judgement that disrupt traditional approaches to knowing in which rationality has operated as the cornerstone of judgement.

Like Bickford and Nussbaum, Lister (1997b, p. 4) is critical of liberal traditions, which "under the cloak of false universalism" have deliberately excluded women from the historical, theoretical and political construction of citizenship but does not want to see the notion of universalism abandoned because of its emancipatory potential. Any reinterpretation of citizenship, she maintains, requires the integration of a gender analysis to understand more broadly the significance of difference. Lister calls for a "differentiated universalism" embodying "the creative tension between universalism and particularity of difference" (p. 5).

Borrowing from the ideas of Chantel Mouffe (1993), Lister's reconceptualization of citizenship seeks to find some way of articulating the tension between the particular and the universal without giving up on universalism altogether, which she sees as holding liberatory potential. The practical application of Lister's differentiated universalism may be found in Anna Yeatman's (1993) "politics of difference" which entails "a commitment to a universalistic orientation to the positive value of difference within a democratic process," "an inclusive politics of voice and representation" and "a readiness on the part of any emancipatory movement to show how its particular interest in contesting

oppression links into and supports the interests of other movements in contesting different kinds of oppression" (p. 231).

Stone (1996, p. 50) takes her discussion of citizenship a step further and wonders whether the concept of citizen itself is outmoded given "the fluid, multiple identities of postmodernism and their resultant momentary associations." She suggests that multiple forms of expression are viable elements of a new citizenship and attempts to move her discussion away from the very dualities of which feminists have been critical. She sees a new citizenship valuing diversity and difference free from the modernist power hierarchy. These qualities, diversity and difference, form the cornerstone of Hirmani Bannerji's (2000) concern regarding citizenship and the relationship of "visible minorities" with the state. She is critical of the "all-pervasive presence of the state" in the lives of people of colour (p.88), suggesting that the construction of difference is both a function and projection of the state. For Bannerji, culture and citizenship in the Canadian context is very much premised upon the dualities that Stone is so critical of. "Visible minorities" and members of non-dominant cultural groups are in danger of remaining non-citizens so long as the apparatus of the state treats them as other. However, Bannerji argues that there is room for creating counter-hegemonic ways of thinking about citizenship that draw upon the "real histories and relations of our social life" (p. 120).

While attempting to provide a broader way of thinking about what it means to be a citizen and what citizenship entails a question that weaves its way throughout these discussions of citizenship is who is a citizen? The recognition that liberal traditions have not been universal, despite claims to the contrary, is helpful in understanding how culture and gender are inextricably linked to citizenship. Whether we are speaking about a new intersubjectivity, connectedness or differentiated universalism, feminist and cultural theorists remind us that it is possible to engage in more extensive conversations around citizenship. They also remind us that we need to trouble liberal understandings of citizenship that shape social studies curriculum, for their exclusionary and dualistic essence.

Citizenship and Social Studies

The social studies curriculum in Alberta, hereafter referred to as the Alberta Program of Studies (2000, p.3) states "responsible citizenship is the ultimate goal of social studies."

As a beginning social studies teacher, it did not occur to me to question this overarching goal. In fact, it seemed logical that my job was to teach "responsible citizenship" in the context of a subject that explored political and economic theories and practices. Despite the fact that I was concerned about the relative invisibility of women and minority groups in curriculum and textbooks, I made no connection to citizenship. This ignorance stems at least in part from the false universality of citizenship in liberal democracies that attempts to construct all citizens as essentially the same despite differences of class, gender, ethnicity and race (Yuval Davis, 1997; Brooks, 2000; Dillabough and Arnot, 2000; Jones, 1997).

In the Alberta Program of Studies (2000), the responsible citizen is defined as "one who is knowledgeable, purposeful and makes responsible choices (p.3)" and part of what constitutes "responsible citizenship" according to the curriculum, is the ability to "participate constructively in the democratic process by making rational decisions". Some teachers and students might understand this to mean that responsible citizenship involves voting, paying taxes and supporting the nation-state. These actions appear to be "rational" insofar as they contribute to the existing system(s). For others, responsible citizenship necessarily requires a critique of the existing system and perhaps even engagement in counter culture movements. Often when we consider engagement in counter culture movements or involvement in social justice work, we are considering taking action because of a passion for something, whether issues of inequity, environmental degradation, or human rights. In this case, citizenship may be understood as a process transcending individual acts in an effort to enact some form of change. Arguably, in this instance, rational decisions are necessarily cast aside in favour of emotional appeals and engagement. We've seen the pictures of the World Trade Organization protestors in the newspapers. Typically these photos do not depict people who are devoid of emotion. Often, the photos tacitly suggest that the action of protesting is harmful, perpetuating such commonsense assumptions that individuals involved in such acts are acting destructively and irrationally. Here a judgement is being made about "responsible" citizenship and what it means to engage in the democratic process.

According to Ken Osborne (1997, p.39), who has been regarded as a leader in the field of social studies education,

> citizenship... is intensely value laden, embodying a set of ideals that represent what citizens ought to be and how they ought live in order to enjoy the rights of citizenship. This is especially the case when we speak of good citizens, by which we mean people who go beyond the minimal requirements of citizenship, who get involved in the affairs of their community, who work for the public good, who help others, and so on".

Osborne is attempting to provide an understanding of what it means to be a citizen while recognizing that the term is inherently value laden and bound up in assumptions about what a citizen ought to do in order to be a citizen. He provides some criteria for measuring "good" citizenship; that is, going "beyond the minimal requirements". However, what these minimal requirements are remain ambiguous and fail to account for the role of dissent, support and even anger in citizenship. Further, the implication seems to be that if I am unable to become actively involved in the affairs of the community or the state that I am less a citizen or even a non-citizen since I am unable to fulfill the "minimal requirements" of citizenship. Further, protesters engaged in active involvement through counter culture movements could be perceived as exceeding the "minimal requirements of citizenship" even if that means working against the "public good" whatever that might be.

In the context of liberal democratic schooling, the understanding of responsible citizenship that shapes curriculum and classroom teaching is similar to the understanding of citizenship provided by Ken Osborne. There is recognition that we are all bestowed with certain rights as citizens of a state, but that we have certain obligations to the state in return for these rights. Citizenship, in the context of rights and duties, or obligation, attempts to become the great equalizer; that is, in a country such as Canada, citizenship is bestowed universally so becomes a measure of equality. What this suggests is that our individual identities and multiple subjectivities become irrelevant or disappear as we engage in citizenship. Whether we are male or female, black or white, First Nations or European, young or old, we are all entitled to the same, universally bestowed rights, we are all entitled to participate "rationally" and "constructively" in the political and economic systems in which we live with relative ease. Thus, transcending "the minimal requirements" of citizenship to really become "good" citizens should not be

difficult. However, this is a simplified approach to citizenship, which fails to account for the realities of gender and culture in the lives of individuals.

I never thought about citizenship as a gendered or cultural construct having lived within its false universality in my own schooling as a student and as a teacher. It also never occurred to me that citizenship needed to be examined beyond the cursory debate educators were enmeshed in that involved discussions of the process and outcomes of citizenship, essentially a debate between the traditions of civic republicanism (obligation) and the traditions of liberalism (rights). In many respects this debate acted as a screen to block out other deeper issues of citizenship. The more the debate focussed on what was meant by "responsible" citizenship, the easier it was to ignore the roots of citizenship in this debate, who was and was not a citizen, and the implications for culture and gender in social studies curriculum.

In his discussion of critical multiculturalism, Stephen May (1999) reminds us that the *apparent* (my emphasis) neutrality of civicism must be interrogated if we are to succeed in the creation of a non-essentialist concept of difference. He suggests that "the supposedly universal, neutral set of cultural values and practices that underpin the public sphere of the nation state" (p.22) are in fact not neutral because they are reflections of the cultural and linguistic values of the dominant group. He reminds us that

> While the merits of individualism, secularism, and personal autonomy with which these civic values are most commonly associated should be clearly acknowledged, so too should their historical and cultural situatedness, as well as, at times their cultural specificity (p.22).

If we are to pay attention to the historical situatedness of civic values then we must in some way, pay attention to citizenship as a falsely universal construct. After all, it has only been in the last century that women, especially minority women, have been *permitted* access to the polis. Their virtual exclusion up until this point is a heady reminder that in liberal democracies, citizenship has not been universally bestowed.

Gayatri Spivak (1993) points to this exclusion in her statement that "the story of the straight, white, Judeo-Christian, heterosexual man of property is the ethical universal (p.19)." Spivak's concerns are echoed by Kathleen Jones (1997), who maintains, "western understanding of citizenship is represented by the identity, actions, and locale

of a dominant group of elite political actors – white, heterosexual, bourgeois, European men (p.2)." Similarly, Andrea Bear Nicholas (1996),Veronica Strong-Boag (2002), and Madeline Arnot (2002) critique current conceptions of citizenship embedded in education as reflective of a dominant and masculinized culture.

Regardless of whether the original intent of democracy was to treat all people as equal, the reality has been that some people are more citizens than others. George Orwell wrote about this phenomena in his allegorical novel *Animal Farm.* In it, a group of animals take control of the farm on which they have lived in servitude. While the original intent was that all the animals would be equal once their master was overthrown, a group of pigs come to assert that "some animals are more equal than others." Orwell provides a telling insight into the way in which political systems, regardless of how they are labelled, have faltered in their efforts at equality. The assertions of both Spivak and Jones are reminders of this, speaking to the way in which citizenship has historically been bestowed on certain individuals in liberal democratic states by virtue of their gendered and cultural locations.

The experience of citizenship is vastly different for individuals who occupy a variety of subject positions and postmodernism reminds us of the dangers of essentializing any subject position. I may be a woman, but my 'femaleness' does not mean that I have shared a common experience with all females for I am, after all, other things to being female. Nor does my cultural location suggest that I share the same experiences with all members of my cultural group. Often, conversations about social studies tend to focus on culture rather than both culture and gender, failing to recognize the intersections of each in the lives of individuals. To return for a moment to May's critique of civicism, he speaks of the cultural implications of treating citizenship as a neutral concept, but pays no attention to gender, which suggest that his assessment of citizenship is bound up in the same traditions of thinking that have reinforced citizenship as a masculine construct.

These are the traditions that social studies curriculum is predicated upon. Tied to the goal of responsible citizenship in the Alberta Program of Studies, is the ability of students to "participate constructively in the democratic process by making rational decisions" (2000, p.3). Stone (1996) and Nussbaum (2001) have noted that from the

time of Aristotle in the third century B.C., a central premise upon which citizenship is based is that of rationality. That the Alberta Program of Studies perpetuates the connection between citizenship and rationality in its raison d'être provides partial evidence that citizenship continues to be a gendered construct in social studies discourse. According to Genevieve Lloyd (1984), models of rationality are male because men have been the ones to possess and enact this rationality in public spaces. Women, on the other hand have historically been associated with emotion and irrationality, justifying their exclusion from public, political spaces (Lister, 1997a; Pateman, 1989; Voet, 1998). Lloyd maintains that it is "the conviction that minds, in so far as they are rational, are fundamentally alike (and deliver) a single objective truth...that underlies our moral and political ideals" (ix). The implication is that the female mind is set apart from the male mind and incapable of objectivity because of its emotional state. It is this notion of rationality, universality, and a single truth that shape the language of citizenship in social studies. Nowhere in the senior high Alberta Program of Studies is mention made of emotion in the context of citizenship or the importance of both rationality and emotion or passion in acts of citizenship.

A Rationale for Social Studies or Citizen as Rational in Social Studies

The Alberta Social Studies Curriculum asks that students make rational choices and attaches to these choices the notion of constructive participation. The inference is that choices deemed non-rational are potentially destructive forces in the democratic process. Earlier in the discussion, I indicated that women were denied access to the polis because they were thought to be too emotional and passionate (like the characters in romance novels that Silbergleid refers to). These characteristics became 'feminized' and separated from the democratic process. The fact that women of the dominant culture in Canada were not granted the franchise until the early 20th century and were not declared persons under the law until 1929 speaks to the masculinization of democracy. Today, despite the right to vote and run for office, women continue to be under-represented in Federal and Provincial Government and as of yet, no woman has been elected by the polis as Prime Minister of this country. In Alberta, no woman has served as Premier of the province and currently, no woman leads any of the parties represented in the provincial legislature.

The Alberta Program of Studies, in its call for rationality and its implicit suggestion that only through rational thought can the democratic process be furthered, perpetuates such gendered understandings of citizenship. Further, I would argue that this emphasis on rationality in binary opposition to emotionality as integral to citizenship is in fact an irrationality disguised as rationale and rational. What I mean by this is that emotionality is not better or worse than rationality, it is simply different. Each approach provides a "spur to the other to deepen and develop" understandings of citizenship (Warnke, 1993, p. 90), yet it is rationality that remains privileged in social studies discourse. In the following section, I provide a preliminary discussion of the function of discourse to sustain dominant cultures, and how this in turn privileges a particular construct of citizenship in social studies curriculum. It is this construct that has implications for questions of citizenship, culture and gender in the spaces of social studies curriculum and classrooms.

Centring Culture in Curriculum

Etta Hollins (1996) maintains that the "school curriculum legitimates knowledge, perspectives, values, and interactions and relationship among people and institutions" and "helps to inform and shape responses to the environment within and outside school" (p. 1). Similarly, Ratna Ghosh and Ali Abdi (2004) argue that,

> Some traditions of schooling and theories on the social construction of knowledge imply that constructions of reality, their selection, and their organization legitimize the knowledge and culture of the dominant group (p.13).

In this respect, then, the social studies curriculum exists as a cultural document with stated expectations for student knowledge, skills and attitudes within the classroom, school, and society. At the centre of these expectations is the goal of responsible citizenship. All content stems from this goal and is, theoretically, designed to ensure that when students leave school they are 'good' and 'responsible' individuals.

Susan Huddleston-Edgerton (1996) believes that the foundations of western society require that there will always be a centre, so in light of this, it is no surprise that citizenship is at the centre of social studies curriculum. If a centre exists, then so too must there be margins to support and sustain the centre's prominence. The margins survive because of their awareness of their own marginality in relation to a cultural centre, yet the centre remains unaware of the margins' existence because to do

otherwise would require the centre to shift. Social studies curriculum reflects a parallel situation. The stories and voices that are excluded from curriculum are aware of their exclusion as a function of their marginality stemming from gendered and cultural locations. Feminists, for example, have lobbied for the inclusion of women's experiences and perspectives in school curriculum (Bernard-Powers,1995; Noddings, 1992; Teatreault, 1986; Spender, 1980; Weiner, 1994). However, included voices become normalized, often unaware of the existence of other perspectives and voices. It is through the process of normalization that the voices beyond the centre become negated and forgotten. So too may students and teachers remain unaware of how the curriculum acts as a cultural centre through its processes of inclusion and exclusion just as citizenship acts as the centre of the democratic state, with the same processes of inclusion and exclusion (Lister, 1997a). But how have the practices of citizenship that exclude or marginalize individuals in our society maintained their existence despite a liberal democratic discourse that is founded upon an equality of rights? A likely possibility involves a discussion of the way in which education, specifically social studies, is caught up in discursive practices that sustain dominant traditions and thus inequities.

Caught in the Discourse

The discipline of social studies has resisted any significant shift in content and structure despite the continued attempts of academics and educators to open up the curriculum and create spaces for issues of gender and culture. Reading the curriculum of social studies as both cultural document and canon requires an analysis of the discursive practices embedded in it, for it is through discourse that canons are created, normalized, and perpetuated. Michael Foucault (1974) argues that it is through discourses that our ways of thinking about the world and our cultural practices become normalized (McCarthy's commonsense meanings and Gadamer's prejudgments). Robert Wright (2000) supports Foucault's assertion, defining a discourse as:

> ...a way of talking about something. Discourses are always socially constructed and anchored in power relationships; however socially or politically neutral they might appear, or however permanent or intractable they seem, they are always fluid rather than static, products of shifting patterns of social consensus and struggle, compromise and refusal. When discourses achieve hegemony, they are invisible; they become naturalized. We lose sight of them precisely because they so effectively seem to represent the world as we experience it (p. 665).

Social institutions, modes of thought and our own subjectivities are structured by the discourses we live in. For example, individuality, rationality, and universality constitute, in part, the discourse of citizenship in the Alberta Program of Studies (2000). Understandings of universalism inherent in the discourse of liberal citizenship lend themselves to the idea/ideal of the 'common good.' If citizenship, as liberal theories seem to suggest, is a universal construct then it seems 'rational' to imagine that there also exists a common good for which we should all strive. After all, universality begets universalisms. Thus, all actions should in some way, contribute to this ideal, even though it has been disputed by feminist and cultural theorists (Mouffe, 1992) as both an impossible task and essentializing force.

Since the world is steeped in difference, the idea of "common" becomes problematic, particularly when attempts are made to reach an understanding or consensus of what the 'common good' should look like. Yet liberal democracies, through the discursive practices that shape them, continue to purport the possibility of such an ideal through the passage of legislation and the circulation of political rhetoric intended to support the notion of a common good. Social studies curriculum avoids the difficulty of reaching a consensus about the 'common good' by already providing students with such a vision of society. Rather than interrogating the inequities of the democratic system in Canada or the false universalism of citizenship, students learn the structures of the political system, how it operates, and the "rights and responsibilities associated with citizenship" (Alberta Program of Studies, 2000, p. 21). In the knowledge, skill and attitude objectives of the curriculum, there is an implicit sense that a common good exists since all students are expected to meet the same outcomes regardless of differences. Thus, citizenship in social studies becomes a personification of the "common good" insofar as students meet rather than questions curricular objectives.

As a citizen of a liberal democratic nation, I may be unaware of how the discourse of citizenship functions to shape my way of thinking and being in the world. Instead of questioning the discourse of citizenship, I simply adhere to the principles set out by the governing bodies. When discourses become invisible like this, they have the potential to wield much greater power, or in bell hooks' (1994) words, "reinforce domination" (p. 4). Discourses are always about relationships of power, whether it is the discourse of the nation, or the discourse of the classroom. The failure of social studies curriculum to

undergo a significant shift in content despite wide-ranging critiques is a testament to the way in which discourses become normalized. The function of discourse is, in part to construct and legitimate power; so as long as the discourse exists, we are caught up in it, as relations of power circulate in ways that perpetuate inequities privileging some individuals and marginalizing others (Foucault, 1974). Both Wright and Foucault speak of the power of discourse to shape the way in which individuals think about things. The discursive practices embedded in social studies curriculum have, over the years, contributed to the normalization of a particular view of the world and a particular way of thinking about and enacting the goals of citizenship. Or as Cleo Cherryholmes (1992) maintains, the knowledge, assumptions, and beliefs that are treated as self-evident truths inform the content and organization of social studies.

Joan Wallach Scott (1999) understands that knowledge Cherryholmes refers to acts as the vehicle through which relationships of power – of domination and subordination – are constructed (p. 2). Thus knowledge and curriculum are inextricably linked in their manifestation of the learning that occurs in schools. They are about everyday practices students find themselves immersed in at school, but more than that knowledge *is* curriculum. Scott's understanding of knowledge reminds us of its complexity and how knowledge may be used to sustain certain forms of power through its production as 'truth'.

For feminist scholar Gaby Weiner (1994), power relations and subjectivity are constituted through discursive practices, which are socially produced, and "the knowledge that is produced *as truth* (my emphasis) is the knowledge that is linked to the system of power which produces and sustains it (p. 100)." If discourses are always socially constructed and informed by power relationships, then the discourse of social studies necessarily reflects an unequal distribution of knowledge that has become the canon of the subject. Liberal definitions of citizenship operate in social studies as a discursive practice, disguising the false universalism of citizenship and marginalizing individuals who find themselves caught in the discourse but not of the discourse.

For example, because we live in a society organized around the principles of capitalism, a 'truth' or commonsense meaning that emerges is that of meritocracy. Individuals who reside in such a society are encouraged to think about the system in which they live as

always rewarding individual talents and efforts. I suspect, at one time or another, we've all heard the adage 'you reap what you sow' meaning the harder you work, the more benefits you will receive. Similarly, the axiom 'the early bird catches the worm' is translated to mean greater effort shall be rewarded. In this context, the individual, regardless of gender or culture, is capable of success. If success remains elusive, then the fault lies with the individual rather than with society. While there are certainly benefits to living in a capitalist system, there are also disadvantages for many individuals depending upon where they are situated (Apple, 1996). Success oftentimes has more to do with membership in a particular group than with talent or hard work. Yet the social studies curriculum in Alberta does little to interrogate the conditions of privilege and oppression propagated by the economic and political systems students learn about in their classrooms embodying instead a false universalism that imagines equality where equality does not exist.

The perpetuation of such knowledge is necessary to the maintenance of a cultural centre, which, as I previously indicated, lacks an awareness of other ways of thinking and being in the world (Edgerton, 1996). Discursive practices support these cultural centres, so the conceptualization of citizenship inherent in social studies curriculum necessitates that we think about it in terms of its universality, rationality, and individuality. The content of the subject supports this in part through its focus on political systems and the way in which individuals live within these systems (Alberta Program of Studies, 2000). There exists then an important and mutually sustaining relationship between knowledge, culture and curriculum. Culture needs knowledge to survive, knowledge is shaped by culture, and curriculum becomes the vehicle through which knowledge and culture are perpetuated and canons or "truths" created.

A Social Studies Retrospective

In the 1970s, a large-scale analysis of social studies textbooks, used in Ontario schools, was undertaken by Garnet McDiarmid and David Pratt. The title of their findings, *Teaching Prejudice* (1971) spoke to the manner in which minority groups were represented in social studies discourse. The cultural values of the dominant group were normalized through the discursive practices of the textbooks. Often, stereotypes were used to describe marginalized groups, reinforcing their marginal position and ensuring the hegemony of the dominant group. This study highlighted the absence of

heterogeneity in social studies textbooks as well as the construction of the "other" that Weis (1995) speaks about. Although Pratt and McDiarmid failed to identify the structure of the curriculum in sustaining such prejudices, and failed to include discussions of gender in their analysis, it is through their research that we are able to see evidence of how social studies textbooks have reflected particular "truths" over time. Subsequently, a huge outcry ensued amongst members of marginal groups and at long last, issues of cultural representation began to permeate conversations about social studies curriculum.

Following Pratt and McDiarmid's groundbreaking study, textbooks began to undergo more serious forms of scrutiny as most provinces adopted some form of equity guidelines to ensure that blatant stereotypes, racist language, and sexist language were removed from the texts. From the perspective of feminist educators, there is no denying that this was a positive move, and it was certainly time that textbooks adopted more positive representations of minority groups. Unfortunately, social studies curriculums avoided the same scrutiny directed at textbooks. So while blatant stereotypes were removed from textbooks, the discursive practices that had fostered their inclusion in the first place did not change, nor did the central goal of social studies in most provincial curriculums. The subject was still as much about teaching citizenship as it always had been and the content did not magically become culturally neutral. I would even go so far as to suggest that textbooks have changed very little since 1971. Issues of representation continue to abound more than twenty years later (Baldwin & Baldwin, 1992; Osler, 1994; Sleeter & Grant, 1991; Tupper, 1998; Tupper, 2003).

My contention that textbooks have changed in only a superficial manner is supported by McCarthy (1998) who states

> Nowhere is this marginalization and suppression of minority cultural identities more in evidence than in the textbook industry in terms of the absence of minority history in school texts, and in terms of the exclusion of emancipatory indigenous scholarship in the process of textbook production altogether.

Not only does McCarthy speak to the marginalization of cultures via textbooks; he also speaks to the suppression of identity. In a research project exploring ethnocultural diversity and secondary school curricula, David Blades, Ingrid Johnston, & Elaine Simmt (2001) note that Canadian secondary curriculum tends not to "invite or include the diverse perspectives of immigrants, or the cultural understandings of First Nations and

Metis peoples" (p. 32). Similarly, Marie Battiste and Helen Semaganis (2002) suggest that curricular conceptions of citizenship continue to neglect Aboriginal understandings of society, roles, and responsibilities and that school curriculum is "biased towards colonialist views of individuals and societies" (p. 93). Veronica Strong-Boag (2002) indicates that women, Aboriginals, and the working class "have been largely absent from social studies and other texts in citizenship education" (p. 38). In order for the dominant group to maintain their identity as dominant there is necessarily a suppression of all other cultural identities. These "other" identities are banished, rendered invisible, devalued. What is so troublesome about this in the context of schooling is that we live and work amidst diversity and difference. It is always everywhere present.

Reading the Subject

The social studies curriculum has been challenged for its continued reliance on this dominant narrative or canon to impart meaning to students regardless of their gender or cultural locations (Cherryholmes, 1992; McCarthy, 1998; Scott, 1999; Tupper, 2003). Elizabeth Ellsworth (1994) maintains

> Teachers and educational institutions interpret and structure meanings into curriculums, and they mediate and produce official school knowledge through language, images, stories, and ways of interacting in classrooms. In this sense, curriculums and teaching practices can be understood as acts of representation, and teachers and students can be understood as active participants in the social construction of meaning (p. 100).

The dominant narrative found in social studies is one such representation, imagining students as a homogenous group. As Ellsworth points out, teachers interpret meaning, but this does not necessarily mean that all teachers adopt the preferred reading of a curriculum or a textbook (Fiske, 1987; Hall, 1980; Wright, 2000). Rather, the gendered and cultural location of the reader may lead him or her to adopt a different stance. Further, there is no guarantee that simply because teachers and students are invited to make meaning based on particular forms of knowledge they unquestioningly interact with the discourse. Meaning is never fixed. Wright acknowledges this in his discussion about discourse. Students and teachers are never passive recipients of discursive traditions. There is a complicated interplay between participants in a discursive practice despite the existence of power relations and ideological commitments.

Stuart Hall (1980) describes this complicated interplay as encoding and decoding. He argues that the dominant ideology is typically inscribed as the 'preferred reading' in a text but readers do not instantly adopt this reading. Rather, the social situation of the readers (whether it is the teacher or the students), may lead them to adopt a different stance. 'Dominant' readings are produced by those whose social situations favour the preferred reading whereas 'negotiated' readings are produced by those who inflect the preferred reading to take account of their position. Finally, 'oppositional' readings are produced by those whose social position puts them into direct conflict with the preferred reading (p. 135). Because of this, it is important to think about how teachers construct meaning in their teaching of social studies and what sorts of meaning they are constructing. For it is teachers who are given the task of imparting knowledge to students and how they do this will depend in part upon their own reading of the curriculum and their own locations in relation to the curriculum.

It is through the essence of "taught knowledge" that students come to know the world "as one made by European ancestors and white people generally" (McCarthy, 1998, p.111). In part, my research attempts to explore the ways in which teachers negotiate the knowledge embedded in social studies as they engage in the process of interpreting and teaching curriculum to students. The curriculum has been recognized as a privileged space in which differences in power and privilege manifest themselves (Giroux, 1998; Weis, 1995). Yet it is important for me to acknowledge the impossibility of creating a curriculum that contains all the stories, voices and experiences that have shaped history (it would be impossible, due to the constraints of time, to present a complete version of past events). However, I am concerned about the curriculum's resistance to any major change in content and structure despite the longstanding efforts of educators and academics. I am also concerned with how individuals in the classroom are constructed by the curriculum as citizens, weak or strong, good or bad. It is this concern that has informed my desire to engage in hermeneutic conversations with social studies teachers around their considerations of citizenship, culture and gender and to open up the spaces of understanding in relation to these issues. In the next section of this dissertation, I provide an in-depth discussion of the role of philosophical hermeneutics and feminist thinking in my research and introduce the five teachers who explored with me questions of citizenship, culture and gender in social studies.

Chapter Three:
Philosophical Hermeneutics and Feminist Research or Feminism as a Critical Hermeneutic

How long should my methodology chapter be, I wonder? I'm sitting in the library surrounded by years of completed dissertations from all manner of academic disciplines. I madly flip through each one, quickly calculate the number of pages each dedicates to methodology. They vary slightly, but the differences do not appear significant. But wait - what am I doing? Why should I allow other work to dictate how I organize my own? It seems to me that what I am attempting to do is find some sort of implicit approval for how I "choose" to organize my own work. But then the choice ceases to be mine. Instead it is tied to prescribed ways of doing things, certain academic standards and expectations that I, and my work must "fit into" no matter how ill the fit. Yet I want to create something that reflects my passions, my way of being, not the other way around. So, I close the dissertations I have strewn around the table, pile them up one on top of the other, get up from the table, and walk away.

Research as Resistance: A Dialogue with Feminism

When I was writing my masters thesis, the Faculty of Graduate Studies at the university I was attending required that all completed manuscripts be submitted in the proper format. There was little room to manoeuvre beyond the mandated requirements, and non-compliance often resulted in a refusal to accept the thesis or dissertation. When I enquired as to the rationale behind such requirements, I was told that there needed to be uniformity in order to judge that all theses submitted were of a particular standard and fulfilled the criteria deemed essential in the pursuit of a graduate degree. It occurred to me that a better way to judge the quality of a thesis was to read it, but I was told that this was an impossible task. How could the meager staff at the Faculty of Graduate Studies possibly read all of the work submitted to them? What they failed to realize was that at the point of submission, the thesis had been read, and deemed "acceptable" by an academic committee, so really the organization of the document one chose seemed insignificant. Yet, from the perspective of the person I submitted my thesis to, format rather than content was the measure of an "acceptable" thesis. I complied with the requirements only because I needed to finish and I did not, at that time, have the will or the proximity to fight.

I find myself thinking about these standards as I struggle with writing my dissertation. Initially, I wanted the format of my work to reflect a resistance to traditional academic structures that I perceived as limiting the possibilities of research. I am aware that we are tradition bound but that this does not mean that the meanings embedded in traditions are static or unchanging. So rather than resisting what I perceive to be traditional academic structures, my challenge is to understand how my own thinking has been shaped by such traditions, how I might move within and beyond these norms to find my own way of writing, my own form and structure, or as Georgia Warnke (1993, p. 87) so eloquently states, how I might see that taking up a tradition and reflecting upon it "can be to involve oneself not in dogma, but in a context for interpretation, reinterpretation, and inquiry". Thus, within the content of my work I must reflect upon traditional academic discourses and epistemologies as part of the process of interpretation with an eye to my own historical relationship with these traditions which are after all not static. I also find myself thinking about the notion of "an impossible task". There are days when I feel that balancing full time graduate work with caring for my daughter, looking after my home, and participating in all of the other requirements of daily living is an impossible task. Yet I do it, and would even venture to say that I do it well. The notion then of the "impossible task" is just that, a notion. It is designed to inhibit work that deviates from the norm, and in a larger sense, it is designed to preclude the possibility of transformative work.

The work of feminism has been one such "impossible task" and feminist theory and research attempts to make possible that which has often been viewed as impossible – the transformation of knowledge through the messiness of everyday talk. So while philosophical hermeneutics orients my research, it is informed by feminism as a critical hermeneutic, which recognizes that understanding is at once "partial and perspectival" and embraces the need to "work to eliminate the constraints of repression and exclusion from the domain of interpretive debate" (Warnke, 1993, p. 99). However, feminism as a critical hermeneutic must be understood as standing within and emerging from the traditions of feminist research and of philosophical hermeneutics which I will discuss throughout this chapter and which guide my use of conversations as a means of enacting my research and coming to new understandings of citizenship and the possibilities of social studies.

Feminist standpoints have attempted to critique traditional structures of knowledge. Inequities and injustices that prevent women from fully engaging in society have been revealed and communities of women working towards social change have emerged, leading to the inclusion of women in more genuine ways. Feminism as a critical hermeneutic attempts to find new languages and reinterpret language as a means of understanding the varied and multiple experiences of women. It recognizes that women need to produce knowledge for women, through research, rather than knowledge about women (Lather, 1992; Smith, 1999). Such knowledge is created through learning from the insights of each other and understanding how each of us is shaped by the traditions into which we were born and our own diverse experiences and situations. In the words of Morwenna Griffiths (1995), feminist epistemologies "unite in turning traditional epistemology inside out" (p.223). When we speak about feminism as a critical hermeneutic, we are speaking about that which attempts to interpret, reinterpret and open up our ways of thinking about the world in which we live, and the possibilities for women living in this world. Research that has historically focused on measurement and evaluation in the tradition of scientific empiricism has reinforced notions of who can know and what is worth knowing. Women have mostly been excluded from this tradition, but when they have been included it has been in the context of creating knowledge of women in a disembodied way. Joyce McCarl Nielson (1990) reminds us that the project of feminist research is not simply to develop a way of knowing about women, but rather to suggest ways of providing a richer and more precise description of the world by including them. Feminism as a critical hermeneutic provides a means of realizing this.

Feminist approaches to research emerged as a result of the growing feminist scholarship of the 1960s and 1970s, which began to recognize the invisibility of women in most scholarly writing and authorized bodies of knowledge (DeVault, 1999). That the assumptions and concepts of every academic discipline were shaped in the absence of women speaks to the need to explore these assumptions and concepts in order to transform the disciplines. This need is the essence of feminism. Feminist research, maintains Marjorie DeVault (1999) is a "field of inquiry united by membership in overlapping research communities – bound together not by agreement about answers but by shared commitments to questions" (p. 27). It challenges received knowledge

through a project of "critique and transformation" (p. 26) and attempts to support research of value to women.

In her book "Transforming Knowledge," Minnich (1990) discusses at length the need to rethink the basic models of knowledge that have excluded and devalued the experiences and perspectives of women. She categorizes knowledge according to the creation of faulty generalizations or universalization, the circularity of reasoning, the creation of mystified concepts, and the perpetuation of partial knowledge. For Minnich, faulty generalizations result when we generalize too far from too few perspectives "taking humans of a particular kind to be the only ones who are significant, the only ones who can represent or set the standard for all humans" (p.51). Circularity of reasoning draws on definitions, principles and standards that emerge from faulty generalizations. These are used to explain and justify the ongoing exclusion and devaluation of everything omitted from the initial inquiry. Mystified concepts attempt to mask the hierarchically invidious monism of this system of exclusion and devaluation by creating a category that is held up as the most real category of knowing and defines and judges all other categories accordingly. Partial knowledge is yet one more attempt to perpetuate and justify exclusions inherent in a dominant system of knowledge (p.178). For women, the task of transforming knowledge has been an onerous one and is far from over. Feminism as a critical hermeneutic creates spaces and opportunities for women to subvert the categories of knowledge Minnich speaks of. By placing gender as a central category of concern in research, we are able to open up a critique of the knowledge system Minnich speaks of. Further, by engaging in research for women rather than about women, attempting to understand the diverse and particular experiences of women as they have grappled with received knowledge and their own absences within dominant meaning systems, a shift in thinking necessarily takes place.

While men have typically not been a part of the conversation around feminist research, I believe that they need to be a part of the project as well. Research that provides a more inclusive and genuine understanding of the world benefits both women and men. In fact, in some respects it might even be more beneficial to men who have been caught up in a dominant and paternal meaning system. The same argument has been used by multicultural educators who maintain that it is crucial for mainstream students to have access to perspectives outside of the dominant discourse (Ghosh, 1996). Diverse

classrooms provide different opportunities for learning then do homogenous classrooms, so multicultural education must happen in these settings. Similarly, feminist approaches to research provide spaces for women to engage in research, but should not prevent men from participating simply because they are men. I realize that the intent of feminist engagements in research is critique and transformation through research for women rather than about women but including men in such a project does not mean that the focus has to change. There is much to learn from the insights of all people just as there is much for men to gain from feminist thinking, especially if our goal is transformation.

To engage in feminist research, to employ feminism as a critical hermeneutic, one must resist approaches to research that unquestionably uphold scientific truths and objectivities. DeVault (1999) suggests that contrary to traditional empirical approaches to research, "truths in feminist research illuminate varied experiences rather than insist on one reality" (p.3). For DeVault, these truths are not the truths of grand narratives, but are smaller, more particular and more situated. She views truths as highly personal and as such, often criticized by those engaged in traditional research as being too subjective, to specific, and impossible to generalize (Harding, 1987). But what is the point of doing research if we are to limit our possibilities for new understandings because we fear critique? Any attempt to liberate method will be met with suspicion and criticism by those who are reluctant to see the vast possibilities for generating knowledge that feminist thinking offers.

One of the reasons for engaging in research, I would argue, is to open up possibilities, to rediscover knowledge that has always existed, but in some cases, has been suppressed or forgotten. This research project attempts do all of these things, to open up conversations that have remained silent for too long. While feminist research may not produce "truths" in the traditional sense, Patricia Hill Collins (1990) suggests that knowledge produced from a particular standpoint is a 'partial truth' but knowledge that is admittedly partial is more reliable than partial knowledge that claims to be absolute truth. What Hill Collins is attempting to elucidate is that feminist research and scholarship have repeatedly found themselves in confrontation with knowledge that describes itself as truth when in fact it is only "true" for those whose perspectives and viewpoints are embedded in it. The response from some feminists has been to claim partial truth that recognizes the particularity and subjectivity of knowledge. While she makes an important

distinction, it is important to note that the idea of 'reliability' in research is heavily value laden. Hill Collins may be using it to expose the false universalism of certain knowledge, which is a laudable endeavour, but she is still defaulting to a language that feminist research attempts to transcend. Reliability, validity, and generalizability are 'thick' vocabulary imbued with a sense of neutrality that may not exist. Rather than unquestionable adherence to the already established neutral "rules" of research, we must reflect upon and if necessary destabilize the conventional procedures of disciplinary practice tied to the agendas of the powerful (Smith, 1990). Feminism as a critical hermeneutic takes seriously the need to understand our own engagement with research in relation to those that may be "imposed" upon us without altogether giving up on the insights they offer.

Feminist research includes attention to the unsaid, collaboration in a search procedure, recognition of experiences and feelings within the inquiry process, minimization of harm and control, and maintenance of research with a provisional and open character (DeVault, 1999; Mohanty, 1991, Nielson, 1990). Attention to the unsaid has been of particular concern for feminist researchers who are troubled that language reflects male experiences and that women struggle to find the words they need to express a feeling or describe an experience (Minnich, 1990). Often, language falls short and experiences and feelings are left incomplete. DeVault (1999) talks about the difficulties she encountered in naming her own research. She struggled to find the words to describe what it was she needed to understand. Eventually, she named her research "Feeding the Family" but still felt that this did not fully express what it was she wanted to explore or the experiences of the women in her study. Minnich (1990) reminds us that "listening to the voices of others, we also notice the easily forgotten obvious: even when we are all speaking the same languages, there are many 'other' languages at play behind and within what the speakers mean and what we in turn understand" (p.9). With this in mind, it is essential that we listen to the words that research participants voice, but also pay attention to struggles in expression, difficulties in communication, and thoughts left incomplete.

Collaboration in the search procedure recognizes that both researcher and participant have something valuable to offer in the search for meaning. Because traditional empirical research has tended to avoid a collaborative approach, and imposes a set of

structures on participants, it potentially limits what the participant can offer the researcher. Acknowledging that experiences can be shared enriches the possibilities for engaging in research and often allows topics to unfold as the research progresses (Fine, 1992). Thus, the search for meaning is a collaborative one, in which the feelings of participants add to the process, rather than deter from it. I feel it is important to indicate that when I speak about research participants, I am including the researcher in this category as an acknowledgement of the shared nature of feminist research. In this approach there is an implicit recognition of the power structures that have shaped positivist research and opened it up only to a select group of individuals.

While collaborative approaches to research are characteristic of feminism, they are not unique to it. For example, narrative inquiry, grounded theory, and action research are approaches to research structured around collaboration. An important difference however, is that the central preoccupation of feminist research is with the politics of knowing and being known (Lather, 1992), of engaging "reflectively in the traditions with which it is involved" (Warnke, 1993) and remembering "that feminist methodology is not a specific set of guidelines for research but a continuing process of combining critical analysis of mainstream research, openness to differences in approaches, and concern for paradigmatic change" (Joyappa & Self, 1996). Feminists embrace a collaborative approach in an effort to divest the researcher of the embedded privilege and power found in more traditional forms of research and as an acknowledgement that research *about* women has never been collaborative.

Finally, research that embraces feminism as a critical hermeneutic, attempts to recognize the open and provisional character of research. What this means is that research is open insofar as participants are able to report experiences in their own terms, rather than reporting them within the constraints of a predetermined system. It is open insofar as "no voice can retain a monopoly on interpretation and no voice can try to limit in advance what we might learn from others'" (Warnke, 1993, p. 97). Thus, it is important to allow questions to remain open, to recognize and accept the ambiguity of experience and feelings, and understand that meanings may sometimes be elusive. Research is provisional because meaning is always shifting and is dependent upon the participation of individuals in a dialectical interchange.

Meaning Speaks: A Dialogue with Philosophical Hermeneutics

When I first begin my graduate studies I join a reading group, an act that reflects my perception of what graduate school should be: reading, discussing, debating, thinking, re-thinking, and understanding. The text we select is Joseph Dunne's "Back to the Rough Ground" and it is much more difficult than I imagine it would be. How can I possibly contribute to the group if I am unable to make sense of the text? The words swim before me with meaning that escapes. It's my turn to present a chapter and I am almost frozen with panic, alone and ignorant. This is it, the group will know that I don't belong in grad school, that I'm a fraud who has so far fooled everyone, and now the gig is up. If only the words would just make sense. But then I realize, it's not the words that don't make sense, or even the meaning, it's my fear of them that prevents me from understanding. Yet the purpose of the reading group is to work together to construct meanings, to come to understandings, through the interchange of ideas and insights. We are always moving between ignorance and insight, and the process of learning requires recognizing that which we think we know, and that which we are coming to know. I return to the reading with renewed energy and optimism.

The goal of research is to make meaning from that which we do not know or comprehend, in an effort to arrive at some form of understanding or to produce new knowledge. Shaun Gallagher (1992) refers to this as "learning to take wisdom from … the process of interpretation (p.1). Richard E. Palmer (1969) refers to it as looking for the "deeper significance" of meaning (p. 43)," and John Caputo (1987) refers to it as "restoring life to its original difficulty (p. 1). Like feminist research, hermeneutics offers possibilities for my research through a "focus on the interpretation of the meaning of any text" (Richardson, 2002, p.20) and on the dialogic process of understanding. Research necessarily requires interpretation as it attempts to understand phenomena or experience and is therefore dependent upon the existence of a text. The text may be written and take the form of a book, a document, a poem, a song, or it may be oral and take the form of spoken language. Michael A. Cowan (1994) says of meaning that it "is not an entity residing in the text or in the mind of the reader; it is an event that happens between them" (p. 68) and Deborah Kerdeman (1998) suggests that the "structure of learning consists in a dialectical interchange" (p. 247). What is necessary is a willingness to engage the text, converse with it, reflect upon our understandings of it, and produce new meanings through our encounters with it.

Hermeneutics, maintains Paul Ricoeur (1973), proceeds from the belief that we do not understand. It does not propose to arrive at definitive answers to the problems or difficulties of life, but accepts instead the ambiguity that comes with interpretation (Smith, 1991; Jardine, 1998 & 2000; Richardson, 2002). In my own research, I am not seeking

definitive solutions or even concrete answers to a series of questions. Rather, I am seeking to understand the mediation of meanings and the interplay between meaning and being. I have chosen this approach because I do not think that it is possible, or even desirable, to quantify teachers' interpretations without losing the essence of the research. I accept that there will be ambiguity, tension, and uncertainty, I recognize a "partial and perspectival character of understanding" but believe these to present possibilities for understanding (Warnke, 1993, p. 99). To borrow from Gadamer (1988) "all understanding is always more than the mere recreation of someone else's meaning" (p.338) and "understanding is the original characteristic of the being of human life itself" (p. 259). Curriculum reflects a recreation of meaning through the ideologies that govern it. But it also reflects an opportunity for the creation of meaning beyond its governing ideologies. By reading texts in a hermeneutic way, we are able to broaden our understanding of the world reflected through them, rather than merely accepting the mode of intentionality that accompanies the text (Simms, 2003). Hermeneutics offers us a way to move forward through and beyond such texts while at the same time acknowledging the original difficulties of life so as "not to foreclose on our future" (Jardine, 2000, p.115).

With its focus on understanding, interpretation and meaning; its recognition that our "understanding is both enabled and limited by the traditions, structures and language within which our lives are embedded" (Smits, p.289), hermeneutics becomes a doorway through which I am better able to understand how the teachers in my study are engaging with citizenship in social studies curriculum. Gallagher (1992, p.25) maintains that

> If education involves understanding and interpretation; if formal educational practice is guided by the use of texts and commentary, reading and writing; if linguistic understanding and communication are essential to educational institutions; if educational experience is a temporal process involving fixed expressions of life and the transmission of the critique of traditions; if, in effect, education is a human enterprise, then hermeneutics, which claims all of these as its subject matter, holds out the promise of providing a deeper understanding of the educational process.

It is this deeper understanding that I am in search of. Often, the day to day realities of teaching prevent us from engaging in a deep and prolonged reflection, not just on our practice, but on that which we are mandated to teach. Teaching can be a very isolating task not in terms of contact with people, because we see many students every day, but in terms of the opportunity to speak about our experiences of teaching. We become

overwhelmed by the task of getting through the curriculum, and that becomes the impetus for our own relationship with curriculum, especially in an age of high stakes testing. Thus, getting at the deeper meanings of curriculum, the deep language of citizenship, and the way in which teachers interpret and understand this language in social studies necessitates first a sustained opportunity for reflection and second a dialogical process that opens possibilities for the emergence of meanings.

Just as the teachers in my study mediate curricular meaning, I too interpret the curriculum based upon my own situatedness and historical experiences. My experiences as a student, a teacher, a mother, a wife, a friend, a daughter, have all brought me to this place of critique so they become important elements of the research. In many ways, these characteristics are more than elements of the research, for the research is embodied by them and they embody the research. I am as much a participant in the research project as I am a researcher.

Hermeneutics acknowledges this relationship and sees it as an integral part of the interpretation of any text. Gilles Deleuze (1977) suggests that insights stem from the "middle" or the "between" of dialogue and that meaning is riddled with complexity and ambiguity (Richardson, 2000). What we think another person means might not be what he or she intended, but still we try to make meaning from their words. Similarly, our own meanings may be obscured through the interplay of words and ideas, leaving the other person frustrated and confused but able to come away with some kind of understanding. For when we engage in conversations, meaning exists in the collision of words and ideas that find each other in the "middle" or "between" of the dialogue. It is what each of us brings to the conversations and the interplay of our understandings that provide spaces for knowing.

Knowing results from what Gadamer (1988) refers to as a "fusion of horizons" For Gadamer, a horizon is connected to our situation, or our individual standpoint. This is the place from which we understand the world, integrally linked to how we know ourselves and have come to know ourselves. The notion of horizon emerges in relation to our ability to see beyond ourselves and our own situatedness, it requires not only taking account of our prejudgments but acknowledging that others might understand the world in disparate ways. Misunderstanding occurs when we fail to place ourselves

within our own historical horizons, but understanding results from a fusion of horizons in which differing situations and horizons come together in the creation of meaning. Gadamer (1988) maintains "when we have discovered the standpoint and horizon of the other person, his (sic) ideas become intelligible, without our necessarily having to agree with him (sic)" (p. 270). In this sense, we come to understand together. Because Gadamer's notion of horizon is very much dependent upon our prior learning, we must be willing to question what we think we know when we come together in conversation, if genuine learning is to occur (Kerdeman, 1998). So while I wonder how teachers are mediating the meaning of citizenship in social studies curriculum and whether they see a relationship between citizenship, and social inequities, the question must remain open so as to allow meaning to develop.

Talking Through Hermeneutics: Four Approaches to Thinking

There is never just one way of doing something and or thinking about something, but sometimes, we get so caught up in our own way of doing or thinking, that we are unable to see the multitude of possibilities. I recently attended a meeting where an important decision required discussion and a vote. Several people got up to speak against the resolution and while some of them made valid points, overall it became an exercise in maintaining the status quo. Finally, out of frustration, my father went to the front of the room and spoke about the importance of looking to the future and considering new possibilities. He closed by saying "behold the turtle – he only makes progress when he sticks his neck out". For me, attempting to understand the various approaches to hermeneutics and to consider the possibilities of each for my own research has been an exercise in "sticking my neck out". Like the turtle, I have had to step outside the comfort of my "shell" in order to expand my thinking and move forward through it.

Hermeneutics, much like feminism, does not function as a single narrative. Within hermeneutics, several traditions have emerged over time, and depending upon the orientation, inspire the way that we think about interpretation and understanding. Because, as Gadamer (1988) indicates, the interpretive project of hermeneutics demands a willingness to reveal the prejudices that guide interpretation it is important for me to discuss the approach(s) that has informed my research along with an explanation of why I have selected them.

Briefly, conservative hermeneutics (also referred to as validation hermeneutics), based upon the definitions of Dilthey and Schleiermacher, attempts to reach a universal or objective truth through the act of textual interpretation. Conservative hermeneutics suggests that there is an intended meaning and that this meaning can be arrived at

through rigorous interpretation. Emilio Betti argues that it is possible to attain objectivity in the act of interpretation and arrive at an objectively valid interpretation. It is his belief that the object of interpretation always remains the object regardless of the role subjectivity plays in the process (Palmer, 1969). In this reading of hermeneutics, meaning and the hermeneutical situation remain separate so that one clear interpretation can prevail (Hirsch, 1967). The ambiguity and complexity referred to earlier by David Jardine (2000) and David G. Smith (1991) are not found in conservative hermeneutics with its emphasis on objectivity. In fact, conservative hermeneutics demands that confusion be resolved and ambiguity eliminated in our pursuit of objective understanding.

Like Betti, E.D. Hirsch (1967) believes that we are in fact able to determine the intent of a text from the standpoint of its author and because of this make possible objective and repeatable meanings. Clearly, conservative hermeneutics operates within existing paradigms but fails to challenge these paradigms, building on traditions rather than questioning them (Betti, 1980; Bramall, 1999; Gallagher, 1992). For feminists, there is a danger in this approach to interpretation, a danger that in the name of objectivity, certain voices and understandings will be devalued or excluded altogether. Further, those texts subject to "objective" readings may be the very ones from which women have been excluded, rendering them even more invisible, beyond the realm of knowledge. For women, conservative hermeneutics contributes to a tradition that has historically failed them in many respects. Also worthy of note is the danger that the complexity of hermeneutics will be ignored in such a narrow and limiting definition of interpretation as conservative hermeneutics espouses (Palmer, 1969).

I am not denying that a text, or in the case of my research, the curriculum may contain a *preferred* or embedded meaning, but as I have already stated, this meaning is not adopted by all readers of a text, nor should it be. Rather, meaning is fluid and evolving. To suggest that a universal or objective meaning can be arrived at through a rejection of the particularities of individual experience and identity denies that there is a fluidity and openness to interpretation. Understanding requires an allowance for differing interpretations and weighing of viewpoints. Despite my criticism of it, conservative hermeneutics has drawn attention to the subjectivity behind a text and to the notion that history is "a series of world views" (Dilthey, 1926, 161).

Unlike conservative hermeneutics, moderate or philosophical hermeneutics of which Hans Georg Gadamer is a leading theorist, posits that there can never be a completely objective interpretation of a text, nor should there be. Gadamer (1988) maintains, "hermeneutics is an analogue for human life, conceived not as an objectively rendered picture" (p. 101). As readers of texts, we find ourselves thrown into a world that already exists. This world, embedded in language, shapes our own experiences and prejudices through which we interact with the text. Language prevents us from gaining an absolute access to meaning at the same time that it allows a measure of access to meaning (Gallagher, 1992). In the words of John K. Smith (1993), "philosophical hermeneutics allows no room for the idea of the uniquely correct or accurate interpretation" (p.138). Similarly, David G. Smith (1991) asserts, "the meaning of anything is always arrived at referentially and relationally rather than absolutely" (p.197). Both Smiths recognize that understanding is both contingent and fluid; that the pursuit of truth in the scientific tradition is little more than the tightening of that tradition; that what we should strive for instead is deeper self-understanding as we wrestle with the meanings that we create from texts and conversations.

Within philosophical hermeneutics, it is possible, even probable, that through conversation, through language, we are able to achieve some understanding of the meanings of a text as we navigate it through our own interpretative processes. Zeus Leonardo (2003), in his discussion of Paul Ricoeur's hermeneutics, notes, "through interpretation, we make experiences matter without suggesting that they are made of matter" (p. 345). What Leondardo ascertains is the importance of experiences without making them absolute. Again, the focus of interpretation is not on the objectivity of the act and coming to an objectively valid truth; rather the focus is on meaning. Because of this, philosophical hermeneutics far more than conservative hermeneutics, presents possibilities for my research and the conversations I have engaged in with teachers. Acknowledgment that we can come to an understanding of the meanings in a text through and within language, sustains my research, for without it, I might begin to wonder what the point of doing research is anyway.

It is this sense of the possibility of shared understanding underpinning moderate hermeneutics that leads me away from the radical hermeneutic school of thought and its

assertion that we cannot move beyond false consciousness in our search for meaning (Caputo, 1987; Jardine, 2000). I do not disagree that the intent of interpretation should not be the establishment of a "correct" world view for such a view then becomes oppressive, as evidenced through the traditions of citizenship grounded in a view of the world that has become normalized as "correct." However, as Gallagher (1992) notes, "radical or deconstructive hermeneutics argues that the only truth is untruth, that all interpretations are false, that there is no ultimate escape from false consciousness" (p. 22). To reiterate my previous point, where is the hope in this approach? Is not the suggestion that the only truth is untruth a form of truth in itself and thereby a contradiction? If I were to agree that all interpretations were false, than I would have to accept that it is impossible to deepen understanding. If I accept that is impossible to deepen understanding, then everything that I have stressed up to this point becomes meaningless. As an educator, I cannot accept the premise of radical hermeneutics. I have to believe that education continues to present emancipatory potential, for both students and teachers; that it is not always an impossible task.

Rather than speaking about transformation in terms of the truth or falseness of interpretation however, as the debate between radical and conservative hermeneutics goes, we need to speak about it in the context of understanding. The differences between truth and understanding have important implications for my research. To seek out "truth" from the standpoint of feminist thinking undermines the research project which embraces the particularities of lived experiences and recognizes the role that subjectivity plays in interpretation. Freedom does not come from truth; rather it comes from thinking reflexively, from thinking about our thinking, which is "the basic ground for our freedom" (Minnich, 1990, p.137).

Critical hermeneutics is a melding of certain aspects of radical and conservative approaches and is informed by critical theory. According to Bramall (1999), the goal of critical hermeneutics is "emancipation from the constraints of hidden power relations" (p. 466). We are able to achieve emancipation when we come to understand first how discourses are distorted by language which disguises relations of domination and oppression, and when we come to understand how our own world views are shaped by such discourses. This way of thinking resonates throughout critical theory with its focus on disrupting entrenched structures of power. John K. Smith (1993) maintains that

critical hermeneutics focuses on self-reflective understanding of the "causes of distorted communication" (p. 133). Smith's assertion mirrors Minnich's (1990) as both of these theorists recognize the role that reflexivity must play in understanding. Here the similarities between feminist and hermeneutic thought become obvious as each attempts to disrupt entrenched structures of power.

Despite the strengths of critical hermeneutics for emancipation, it is also described as attempting to attain a "liberating *consensus* (my emphasis) free from ideology" (Gallagher, 1992, p.11). In this respect, critical hermeneutics is open to the same critique that conservative hermeneutics has endured. That is to say, it too advocates that we are able to attain some sort of objectivity and separation from our own life-experiences. But we are all caught up in ideology, and can never really escape it. How can we actually separate ourselves from what we are and the experiences that constitute our being? We cannot. We can however, come to an awareness of ideologies that shape our way of thinking and inform our understanding recognizing that all knowing is embodied knowing. This in itself holds emancipatory potential for we cannot do differently until we know differently. Thus, it is a mix of moderate and critical hermeneutics that has shaped and guided my research and the conversations I engaged in with classroom teachers.

Speaking Through Difference:
A Conversation Between Feminist Research and Philosophical Hermeneutics

When I was teaching high school social studies, I was very intimidated by my department head. He had more than 25 years of teaching experience and had very particular ways of teaching and interacting with his students. At first glance, he and I seemed to be worlds apart in our teaching practices and in our world-views, which further deterred me from taking the time to get to know him. However, an incident with one of my students brought us together, and I learned that he and I were not so different as I imagined. We shared many of the same beliefs although we embodied them in different ways. My relationship with my department head reminded me to pay attention to people and ideas, to consider how similarities can abound through difference and to seek out connections regardless of how unlikely these may initially seem.

The essence of feminist research has been to gain understandings through explorations of assumptions and the particularities of experience that shape them (Harding, 1987). While these understandings may be in the context of women's experiences there is no denying that the intent is to create spaces in which meaning emerges. Like

hermeneutics, feminist research recognizes that for meanings to unfold, we must come together in dialogue, to collaborate in the search procedure and acknowledge the role of differing circumstances and viewpoints throughout this process.

That all social life is interpretive is a claim not limited to hermeneutics. Feminist thinking acknowledges the particularity of experience and how our interpretations of and experiences in the world are influenced by where we situate ourselves within a pre-existing system. For women, this is a system, which has historically obscured and distorted their experiences and voices. Thus, there is an attempt to "excavate" these voices, to reveal a consciousness already there but rendered invisible by patriarchal discourses. In the words of Dorothy E. Smith (1999) "taking up women's standpoint as a place to begin locates the knower in her body, in a lived world in which both theory and practice go on, in which theory is itself a practice" (p.7). In this instance, emphasis is placed on the individual's positionality as an embodied knower and feminist theory coupled with philosophical hermeneutics becomes a critical hermeneutic in discovering meaning. If we hope to arrive at new understandings, deeper understandings, then we must consider our own situations in relation to that which we are trying to understand. Embodied knowing, both in the context of feminism and philosophical hermeneutics, leads to deeper understandings of that which we think we know, and new understandings of that which we are trying to know.

Embodied knowing reminds us that the way we view the world is very much a part of who we are and the circumstances in which we live. Gadamer (1988) maintains that there is not one correct, pure, perception of reality despite the claims of Enlightenment rationalism. It is his belief that we must seek to give voice to the traditions suppressed by Enlightenment thinking rather than accepting that there is one best way of thinking about and theorizing the world. Gadamer's thoughts are supported by the work of Smith (1991) who sees hermeneutics as a way to "provoke new ways of seeing and thinking within a deep sense of tradition" (p. 202). Warnke (1993) encourages the use of hermeneutics "to understand and articulate the different ways in which our traditions might be understood" and to "uncover new ways of understanding social practices and human circumstances to which those traditions are meant to apply" (p. 95). Gallagher (1992) suggests that hermeneutics allows what "is alienated by the character of the written word or by the character of being distantiated by cultural or historical distances

speak again " (p.4). Feminists support this assertion for to do otherwise would be to tacitly accept the very system that prevents women from full inclusion in society. It makes no difference whether we speak of a grand narrative, a meta-narrative, an objective truth, or empirical evidence. None of these really allow room for critique or transformation; none of them seem willing to concede the biases of the traditions that created them.

The notion then of "speaking again" is an important one in the context of both hermeneutics and feminism although feminists might suggest that it implies that an opportunity to speak already existed. For women, cultural and historical distances were created and maintained by imposed silences, an unwillingness to hear. Regardless, "speaking again" attempts to broaden our understandings of existing knowledge and the traditions that shaped it. Teevan (2000) suggests that it is important to consider how stories are constructed, who is included and who is left out of these stories, who benefits from how they are told, and which stories are passed on from generation to generation and which stories are not. She maintains that through our consideration of these issues, we are attempting to make spaces for voices that have been marginalized or silenced. This is the project of feminist research just as it is the project of philosophical hermeneutics.

The hermeneutic notion of "fusion of horizons" posits that new perspectives are created through mediation between differing perspectives (Bramall, 2000). It is only through genuine and productive dialogue, a willingness to interrogate our own prejudices or pre-judgments, that we are able synthesize disparate understandings and arrive at new meanings. While not explicitly stated in hermeneutic theory, I believe that in order to arrive at this point, to achieve a fusion of horizons, a connectedness must exist. Within a feminist standpoint, connectedness is a cornerstone of understanding. When we sit down and begin to talk with one another, we find ways to connect with each other through commonalities that bring us together in spite of divergent experiences and interpretations. Minnich (1990) describes this process as "reaching out to others, explaining what we are thinking and doing, opening ourselves to responses, questions and challenges" (p.191). It requires that we recognize how our own subjectivies and histories effect our interactions and it requires that we attempt to understand the place from which others speak. Speaking in terms of the hermeneutic fusions of horizon or in

terms of feminist connectedness is really a matter of semantics for we are speaking of the same process of coming to together in the search for meaning.

Finally, both feminist research and philosophical hermeneutics appreciate the importance of the unsaid in the creation of meaning. According to Ian Heywood and Barry Sandywell (1999), what we say, or what is said points to and reveals what is not said, or unsaid. In fact, hermeneutics suggests that what is "said is not as important as the unsaid which the said *brings to mind*" (p.9). It is often the case when we are reading a text or conversing with others that certain words or phrases evoke particular understandings beyond what is stated. This speaks to the difference between what the speaker or the text means and the multiple ways that the meaning may be stated and understood. Similarly, feminist research pays attention to the unsaid partly because of the long history of silencing that women have endured. There is much that remains implicit in the process of dialogue between women, often because words cannot fully express an experience or an understanding. Yet what we cannot articulate has the power to reveal itself in our minds eye because we pay attention on a deeper level. This in turn produces the possibility for understandings and the creation of meanings beyond spoken or written words.

Talking it Through: A Dialogue with Teachers

I am sitting in a coffee shop, sipping coffee, papers spread out around me. I have the luxury of time today, so pause from my reading and look up; the buzz of voices all around me, for coffee shops are meeting places where people come together in dialogue. A young couple in the corner appears to be in heated debate, two mothers looking frazzled as they tend to their small children are in the midst of carrying on a conversation, and some elderly gentlemen by the window laugh heartily at something that was said. Most of the people in this coffee shop do not know each other and will likely never meet; yet they have something in common. They are all talking with each other, listening, thinking about what is being said, and I am struck by the significance of it all.

Feminism as a critical hermeneutic offers an approach to research that is interpretive and recognizes the particularity of individual responses. It attempts to reconcile the ambiguities and tensions that teachers live within every day (Aoki, 1992). Aoki reminds us that research about teaching must seek the being of teaching (p.20). It is less about solving problems than it is about achieving a heightened understanding of what it means to live in ambiguity and tension as we attempt to interpret the curriculum and teach our students. To seek the being of teaching we must first recognize that objectivity is an

impossible standard in the project of education. "Being" in an Aokian sense is about historical consciousness and the particular realities that teachers face in their own embodied spaces for we cannot separate our being from our bodies.

Lorraine Gelsthorpe (1992) points out that in the research process and in our own work, subjectivity plays an integral role in understanding the way teachers are thinking about and embodying citizenship in social studies. Stuart Hall (1980) reminds us that while there tends to be a preferred reading of a text, particularly as it is manifest in school curriculum, not all individuals adopt this reading. Their understanding of it is very much a part of where they situate themselves as individuals and educators. Thus the way that teachers mediate the meaning of citizenship in social studies curriculum is as varied as the teachers themselves.

Initially, when I was imagining the shape that this project would take, I was concerned that I would need to conduct interviews with teachers as a means of excavating their perceptions and understandings. What troubles me most about the interview process is that it sets up a dichotomy between researcher and participant so it becomes difficult to escape issues of power implicit in such a dichotomy. In this scenario, research becomes less collaborative and much more prescriptive. Feminist researcher Ann Oakley (1981) maintains that the interviewing situation is a one-way process whereby the participant is expected to be the sole giver of information and is manipulated as the object of study. Often, individuals participating in interview scenarios are regarded not as individuals who embody a distinct and unique way of being in the world, but as sources of information. In some cases, their responses to pre-established sets of questions help researchers to arrive at definitive answers to questions. Rather than always being generative, interviews hold the potential to produce predictable responses within the parameters of the question. It is inherently different in so far as there is a failure to acknowledge the importance of what both the researcher and the participant bring to their meeting. This is why I have chosen conversation as my method of doing research.

But what does it mean to engage in conversation? And how can conversation be understood as research? Conversations are a dialogue between individuals, in which each participant brings unique views to research and situates her or himself within the research. The idea of conversations, as acts of communication make understanding

possible and offer opportunities for critical reflection (Smits, 1997). Nicholas Davey (1999) reminds us that in order to take place "conversations require participating subjects" (p.17). For Minnich (1990), conversations offer new beginnings as we "open ourselves to responses, questions, and challenges" (p. 191). As meaning-making activities conversations necessitate the mutual sharing of knowledge (Lave & Wegner, 1991), but meaning does not necessarily emerge from the intentionality of one or more participants (Davey, 1999). What Davey is suggesting is that meaning is unpredictable and uncontrollable. While we may feel, in the midst of a conversation, that meaning eludes us, it is not impossible. Conversations, suggests Allan Feldman (1999, p.137) "always lead to new understanding" through a process of "talking, listening, reflecting, and responding." It is his belief that to engage in conversation is to engage in inquiry in an effort to learn something new. However, for conversations to transcend the banality of everyday chatter, states Feldman, we must be in search of something; we must constantly be questioning what is said in order to learn (p.130). In this sense, conversation becomes a privileged, important act and chatter relegated to secondary status.

I do not disagree with Feldman that the process of learning requires talking, listening, reflecting and responding. Feldman's assertion echoes the earlier comments of Minnich and Smith regarding the importance of reflexivity in understanding, but what concerns me is the distinction he draws between conversation and chatter. My understanding of chatter is informal talk intended to establish a familiarity or connection between people. Yet in Feldman's words, "conversation suggests a connection that is sustained or sustainable and goes beyond chit-chat or chatter" (p. 130). With this distinction, Feldman privileges conversation as a particular kind of speaking and dismisses the possibilities for learning inherent in 'chit-chat' or 'chatter'. Yet chatter may be a necessary precursor to the sort of conversations to which Feldman refers. Before participants are ready to engage in conversations they must first feel comfortable with the person they are going to converse with; they must establish a familiarity, a connectedness central to the hermeneutic and feminist engagement in research, that allows a conversation to begin and to be sustained. This is an essential aspect of feminist research. Thus chatter becomes a vehicle for conversation, providing an opportunity for participants to learn about each other and creating a level of comfort that might not otherwise exist. It is also important to consider the role of "chatter" as

individuals engage in the process of talking, listening, reflecting and responding. Often, chatter finds its way into conversation, sometimes as a means of lightening the heaviness of conversation, to circumvent an uncomfortable moment, or to continue building trust amongst participants. Chatter can provide a means through which the conversation progresses in those instances when it falters, becomes uncomfortable or tentative.

What also concerns me about Feldman's distinction between conversations and chatter is the implicit gendering embedded in the distinction. Historically, women have not been credited with engaging in the type of conversations to which Feldman refers. Instead, women have been associated with the chatter or informal talk that comes from brief encounters with other women at the grocery store, while picking children up from school, or organizing church activities. Based on Feldman's distinction, the assumption seems to be that women's talk is chatter, and men's talk is conversation; that we do not learn from chatter but that we do learn from conversation. And so a binary is created. The implication is that what women have to say is of little importance or significance. While what we learn from conversations may be deeper than what we learn from chatter, the point is that we do learn from chatter – we learn about each other and we learn to be comfortable in the spaces of conversation.

Feldman also fails to concede that power differentials are often at work as individuals engage in conversations. Elizabeth Ellsworth (1997), in her book *Teaching Positions,* talks about the uses of dialogue in teaching and reminds us that dialogue in teaching is "not a neutral vehicle that carries speakers' ideas back and forth across a free and open space between them" (p.49). While she makes this assertion in the context of classroom interactions, the same might be said of conversations between individuals. The words that we speak in the context of coming to understandings through conversation are not neutral. Rather they contain all of the biases of their socio-historical contexts and often reflect our own preconceptions and partialities. Julia Ellis (1998) reminds us that we are "both encouraged and limited by language, social context, and history" (p.44) and participants in conversation are shaped by their own socio-historical circumstances. Gadamer (1988) suggests "we are always within the situation" that "the very idea of situation means we are not standing outside it" (p.269). Because of this, objective language is as much an impossibility as objective knowledge. If we are unable to stand

outside of the situation, then we must recognize how situations are shaped by traditions and how we ourselves are part of such traditions. This realization is referred to by Gadamer as "effective historical consciousness" or our awareness of the situation and how it is shaped by historical circumstances (p.305). Building on Gadamer's work, Jim Garrison (1996) states "cultural traditions have us before we have them" (p.433). With this in mind, when we come together to talk, listen, reflect and respond, we must recognize that power differentials embedded in tradition often exist between participants, affecting what is said, how it is said, and the understanding that results from the encounter.

I recently attended a curriculum consultation hosted by the provincial Government of Alberta and was asked to facilitate one of the small group discussions around the new curriculum for grade 11. At my table were five teachers all with at least five years of teaching experience, three women, two men, and myself. Despite my best efforts to involve the three women in the conversation, it was dominated by the two men who worked very hard to ensure that their way of thinking became "the accepted" way of thinking at our table. I became increasingly uncomfortable with the dynamics of the conversation but found myself unsure how to create a situation in which all of our voices could be heard. By all appearances, it seemed as if talking, listening, reflecting and responding were taking place, so according to Feldman, we were engaged in a true conversation. However, because there were serious power differentials at the table, because certain individuals dominated the discussion, and because reflection was at best superficial, I would argue that in fact we were not engaged in the kind of conversation that leads to deeper understanding. That said, I do not want to discount the power of conversations for the creation of meaning, but I do want to caution against uncritical acceptance of conversations as tools for research.

Despite my critique of Feldman and my concerns surrounding power differentials, conversations as modes of inquiry offer the possibility for educators to "gain new vantage points on their practice" (Carson, 1986, p. 74). The teachers I conversed with in my study were able to gain insight into the traditions of teaching and their own teaching practices in social studies which is an important outcome of the research because the way in which teachers understand and interpret the curriculum has a direct impact on what students are encouraged to learn, to become, or to question in the context of the

discourse. These conversations provide the potential for teachers to enter or return to social studies classrooms with a heightened awareness of their own responsibility to reflect upon the essence of the subject they are teaching and its implications for citizenship. That said, I am not suggesting that as a part of the research, teachers apply their understanding to classroom practice. However, I can not help but believe that once we have come to new understandings, gained insights into our own practice, we cannot avoid returning to the classroom as changed individuals and as such, we cannot help but alter our pedagogies if only slightly.

The understanding that emerges through hermeneutic inquiry lends itself to an understanding of the question of inquiry. Terry Carson (1986) asserts, "an experience of the world directs our attention to the question in the first place. Autobiographical reflection is, therefore, an important aspect of research in a conversational mode" (p.76). My research began with my own reflections on what has drawn me to the question, and through dialogue, my participants have been given the opportunities to recount their own experiences, theorize on the experiences, and come to the question. While I posed a central question to guide my research and the initial conversations, it was simply a guide, and the themes that emerged through the in-betweens, middles and messiness of the various conversations have elicited other sets of questions that were explored throughout the research project. These are discussed in the chapter that follows.

Understandings

Feminist research and philosophical hermeneutics are about having a vision, about uncovering what has yet to be said, and recognizing the instability of ascribed truth. A central project of feminisim has been in response to women's absence from scholarship. It embraces the importance of particularities and individual experiences in research, attempts to include more voices and remove distortions of communication by naming forms of oppression that women have experienced, and engages in an exploration of women's lives. Hermeneutics also attempts to deepen understanding through a process of interpretation that leads to the fusion of horizons. The questions that guide research must remain open so the possibilities for deeper insight are not precluded in a closed and prescriptive approach. Feminism as a critical hermeneutic requires a willingness to listen; a willingness to hear what is said and notice what remains unsaid; and a

willingness to preserve the messiness of daily talk, for it is in this messiness that meaning is created and uncovered.

Choosing to employ feminism and philosophical hermeneutics as research guides has not been difficult, for they complement and support each other. Philosophical hermeneutics recognizes the importance of the question of inquiry and of keeping the question open, while feminist research offers the importance of questioning what we think we know. I stand by my decision to use conversations as a research method as conversations provide vehicles for getting at the understandings that I am in search of, as I will demonstrate in Chapter 5. In light of my critique of citizenship in social studies and the continued emphasis on a dominant narrative, it seems natural to select two approaches that move away from knowledge that claims the status of truth. These approaches become entwined by feminism as a critical hermeneutic which is integral in my reading and interpretation of the texts of my conversations with my research participants, discussed in Chapter 5. They serve as poignant reminders that we are thrown into a world that already exists and must come to make sense of this world through the deep traditions that shape it (Garrison, 1996; Jardine, 2000).

Chapter 4:
Preparing for Meaning:
Participants, Process and the Circle of Interpretation

I remember reading an essay with my grade 10 high school English class one year titled "why I want a wife". My students chuckled over the title because the essay was written by a woman. They also chuckled at the content of the essay, which outlined all of the benefits of having a wife. Unfortunately for the author, having a wife was impossible since she herself was a wife. While I used the essay to teach my students about sarcasm, the essay embodied much more than a literary technique. It spoke to a way of understanding of what it means to be a wife through the particularities of lived experiences. For the author, the concept of wife represented a tension that she faced everyday. For many of my students, reading the essay provided a different look at a concept they thought they fully understood. Reading the essay with my students exemplifies the way that our preconceptions shape our understandings, and how contact with different ways of understanding irrevocably change our own. It is also a reminder of the need to create spaces for different perspectives to be heard in the process of learning.

The Participants: Space to Speak

For teachers, the opportunity to engage in sustained conversation and self-reflection is often elusive. Days are filled with teaching prescribed content, marking student assignments, supervising activities, attending meetings, tutoring students and so on. There is little time for teachers to talk with each other in a meaningful way about teaching, understandings of curriculum, or the confusion and ambiguity that often accompanies the lives they lead in schools.

Early in my research project I believed that because social studies teachers had little opportunity for dialogue with other teachers in their subject area, I would have little difficulty in finding teachers interested in participating in my study. In some respects this was true. I hoped to involve six individuals in my research, an equal number of males and females, and was able to secure the commitment of three social studies educators almost immediately, two men and one woman. However, before I was able to set up meetings, the woman had to withdraw from the project due to family concerns and the illness of her father. Thus, I was left with the challenge of finding four more participants before I could begin my research.

The names of two women were suggested to me by a former social studies teacher who was now at home full time with her son. I immediately contacted these women to invite

them to become involved in my research. However, one of the women felt that she simply could not commit the necessary time to fully participate in the project. Her reality involved two small children at home, a husband who worked full time, and various commitments to maintaining the home and looking after her family. Despite teaching part-time, her role as mother and wife precluded the possibility of participating in the study, even though she expressed interest in the topic. She was apologetic and regretful, but I appreciated her honesty and ability to put herself and her family before extra commitments. The other woman I contacted was also very interested in the research, but felt that her responsibilities outside of school prevented her involvement. She too had children and a house to look after and did these things without the support of a husband, having recently been divorced.

Through my readings of feminist theory, I came to the writings of Diane Reay (1995) who speaks about the fallacy of easy access to women as research participants. It is her belief that those of us engaged in feminist research often imagine we will have no difficulty in involving women in our projects, because after all, we are doing the work to benefit women and improve their situation in the world. The reality, suggests Reay is quite different, for we often forget the varied and multiple ways in which women are always and everywhere enacting their citizenship.

Jones (1997) understands citizenship as existing in both public and private spaces whereby individuals engage in multiple activities informed by shifting subjectivities. For example, the work that happens in the home, the caring for children, the feeding of a family, is but one way that citizenship is enacted. In spaces outside of the home, citizenship may be performed through employment, volunteering, community services, or political participation. Thus, citizenship is understand beyond formal political rights and responsibilities (Schugurensky, 2003) neither purely public, nor purely private. It is typically the case that women, more so than men, have to navigate work in public and private spaces and because of this, have less time and energy to participate in the sorts of research projects feminists are engaged in (Lister, 1997). The women who declined to participate in my project did so not because they lacked the interest or the desire to be involved, but because they embodied multiple and shifting citizenships, making it difficult for them to do anymore than they were already in the process of doing.

At this point, I feel it is necessary to point out that the three men who agreed to participate in my project all had children. Two of the men had small children and wives who chose to work in the home, caring for and raising their children, rather than engaging in paid employment outside of the home. One of the men had older children, still in school, but they did not require the same kind of care as smaller children. His wife worked outside of the home. Despite having small children, the two men did not hesitate to participate in the study. This differs from the two women with small children, likely because the men had wives who stayed home full time, freeing their husbands to engage in activities outside of the home. Feminist Scholar Ruth Lister maintains, "men's independence is built on the freedom from the caring responsibilities" (p. 110). While I am not suggesting that these men failed to participate in caring activities in any way, I am suggesting that having wives at home allowed the two men in my study a certain degree of flexibility to participate not otherwise possible. After much effort, I was able to locate two women to participate in my research, neither of whom had children during the time I met with them. In the end, I worked with five teachers instead of my intended six, three men and two women.

Jardine (1998) reminds us "interpretive work inevitably begins with a living subject in living dialogue with the life that surrounds us" (p. 50). While I do not disagree with the essence of Jardine's assertion, I do find questionable his need to refer to research participants as research subjects. Hermeneutically speaking, interpretive inquiry requires that we come to know the individuals who are participating in research in order to understand their situations. Feminist research supports this approach. Lived experiences offer a context necessary to the hermeneutical circle of understanding (Leonardo, 2003). Such experiences are illustrative of the relationship between the part and the whole essential to the creation of meaning.

I have provided snapshots of the lives of my five participants in an attempt to illustrate that "thinking and research are not begun from scratch" (Carson, 1986, p. 75). Those involved in research come to it with an already existing way of being in the world, or what Gadamer (1988) refers to as "historically effected consciousness". The contexts and experiences of each participant shape their thinking and the direction that our conversations took. Like my participants, I too have an already existing consciousness informing my approach to this research project along with my own engagement in the

conversations. As a woman, a mother, a wife and a feminist, I approached our conversations with the belief that social studies curriculum consistently falls short of providing genuinely inclusive content to students. As I discussed in Chapter One, my own experiences as a student and a teacher of social studies have led me to this belief. Throughout the conversations with participants, I struggled to be open to other ways of thinking about social studies, to hear what each person believed the strengths of social studies to be.

While I do not deny that social studies is a subject filled with possibilities, I did believe at the outset of the research that these possibilities had been ignored and largely absent from contemporary social studies classrooms. I had been disappointed many times by social studies education. My disappointment stemmed partly from a failure of curriculum to create spaces for critiquing some of the fundamental concepts of social studies education, including liberal democratic citizenship, which as feminist socio-political theorists have noted, is a falsely universalized concept (Arnot, 1999, 2002; Lister, 1997a, 1997b; Pateman, 1989; Voet, 1998). I have also been disappointed by the absence of women's lives and experiences from curriculum documents and textbooks, struggling to make sense of my own relationship to the curriculum as a result. Further disappointment has emerged through my involvement in the curriculum development process with Alberta Learning. When asked to rank order a list of topics for inclusion in the curriculum, teachers throughout the province selected women's history as one of the least important areas of study for students (Alberta Learning, 2002). Often the only woman at the curriculum writing table, I fought for the inclusion of gender in the curriculum with very limited success.

Because of my own disappointments with social studies education, I expected that it was likely my participants had experienced disappointments throughout their teaching careers. That said, listening, really hearing, the perspectives of my participants caused me to re-evaluate my own thinking around social studies. I found myself reading through my own experiences from the locations of my research participants. Ellsworth (1997) suggests that reading through can destabilize the initial meaning or understanding we have of something particularly when we place two texts side by side (or in this case, the two voices in conversation) "because the presences or absences in each text and in the senses I have made of them will never match up" (p. 14). I will discuss this in more detail

in subsequent chapters but turn now to providing a snapshot of each research participant.

I recognize that snapshots in a literal sense are limited in terms of what they offer us. There is always something more beyond the picture or something deeper within the picture that we are unable to initially see, likely because of our own pre-understandings through which we view the photo. The picture becomes the text of interpretation opening itself up to new understandings insofar as we see it anew each time we look at it. Thus, snapshots may actually depict more than what they appear to at first glance if we commit ourselves to looking again and again until we are struck by the presence of something in the picture initially "obscured" from view. The following descriptions or snapshots offer an initial glance at the participants in my study but also attempt a deeper look at what struck me about their lives or lived experiences within and beyond their teaching contexts. In particular, certain events or circumstances in their lives that I initially paid little attention to contributed to their sense of themselves as teachers and as individuals and should not be separated from the research project. The following are the snapshots of my participants I have constructed through re-looking at the texts of our conversations and the lived experiences woven throughout.

Lois

I met Lois when I began my teaching career at a large urban high school that met the educational needs of students who were unable to succeed in the public system as well as those of students from other countries who were new to Canada. We maintained a professional friendship during my time at the school, but lost touch when I left to pursue a graduate degree. I remembered Lois as being a highly intelligent woman and respected teacher, who was always available to newer teachers for help and advice. I also remembered her as being a strong and courageous woman who had been diagnosed with a life-threatening illness shortly before we met. She was determined to overcome the illness and her identity was shaped to some degree by this determination. She saw herself as someone who persevered, who was committed to making the most of any difficult situation, whether in the classroom or in her life outside of school. Although it had been more than six years since we had last spoken, I contacted Lois to see if she might be interested in participating in my study. I also knew that Lois and her husband had no children and hoped that because of this, she would be able to commit

the necessary time to the study. Lois was happy to participate in my study and share her nineteen years of teaching experience with me. She came from a family of teachers dedicated to education and felt strongly that she should take the opportunity to speak with me about social studies. At the time of this research project, Lois had just learned that because of funding issues, the high school program she had taught in for so many years was being abolished and the teachers' employment terminated. I believe this had an impact on some of the insights Lois offered and also on the direction that our conversations took, but I will speak more about this later.

Carol

Carol and I knew each other from a graduate class at the university and had also met years ago in our undergraduate program. She had been teaching for nine years when we began our conversations, and was expecting her first child in the early fall. The majority of her teaching experience was at the high school level, and while she began her career teaching primarily French, she now mainly taught social studies classes in a large and ethnoculturally diverse urban high school. For Carol, teaching social studies was a natural fit because it was the area that interested her the most and the subject she regarded as most relevant to students. Throughout our conversations, Carol and I found ourselves talking quite a bit about the impending birth of her child, and the anxiety and uncertainty she felt about becoming a mother. From Carol's perspective, her identity was as a teacher not a mother, and she was struggling with the shifting nature of her subjectivity. She also worried that staying home with her baby for a whole year would be difficult and wondered how she would survive the twelve months. Despite looking forward to the birth of her child, Carol embodied the confusion and uncertainty that first time mothers often experience leading up to the child's arrival.

At the same time Carol was awaiting the birth of her child, she was attempting to complete her master's degree in social studies education. Her biggest fear was not finishing before the baby came and then never finishing as the demands of motherhood superseded all else. Given these concerns, I was grateful for Carol's participation in my study and the unique perspectives she brought to our conversations.

Denis

Denis was the first teacher who agreed to participate in my study. He had been teaching for ten years at a Francophone high school in a large urban centre and French was his first language. Originally from New Brunswick, Denis came to Alberta as a translator, but found that this life did not suit him, so returned to school where he received an education degree. He noted the difference between having lived in an officially bilingual province versus living in a province that he felt did not always value its Francophone population. Because of this, Denis believed that Francophone schools in Alberta had a heightened responsibility to foster a strong Francophone identity. At the time of our first meeting, Denis was teaching physical education and social studies, predominately to students in grades nine and ten. When we met, however, he was just beginning his second semester teaching Social Studies 30 having inherited the course when the previous teacher retired. He was enjoying the challenge, but also felt intimidated by the vastness of the course and the amount of content he needed to cover. He also found it difficult to be the only teacher teaching Social Studies 30 at the school as he felt he had no one to really talk with about the course.

Denis spoke with me about his family and I learned that he had children in elementary school and a wife who was a former teacher but now stayed home full time. For Denis, social studies was a natural fit coming from a family that enjoyed raucous political debates during the dinner hour. He commented that social studies is not for the faint of heart but requires teachers willing to engage in discussion and to talk with students. He was drawn to the subject because of this and because of his love for history. Denis agreed to participate in my study partly because he was craving the opportunity to talk about social studies with another educator and partly because he believed the topic of citizenship to be an important one.

Greg

Like Denis, Greg had small children and a wife who stayed home full time. Greg and I met when he was a student in my university social studies curriculum and instruction class, and stayed in touch after the course was completed. He was one of the strongest students I had ever taught, and came into the course with a Masters degree in English Literature. English was his first love, but he also enjoyed the challenges of teaching

social studies. Before embarking on his masters degree, Greg spent time working for a Western Canadian magazine and exploring the possibilities of journalism, but found his way back to university when he realized he wanted more from a career. He had become disillusioned with the ideological constraints imposed on liberal journalists working for conservative publications. When he agreed to participate in my study, Greg was in the middle of his first year of teaching at a large rural high school in central Alberta with a fairly homogenous student population. He found being a first year teacher exciting and frustrating at the same time. Part of his frustration stemmed from working with students he perceived as lacking passion and motivation. He often spoke of his desire to work with students who were more academic and willing to challenge the material being taught. Greg's strong theoretical background brought richness to our conversations and allowed us to explore many different topics over the course of the research.

Wayne

The child of an immigrant father, Wayne grew up in a working class home. He often spoke of his childhood in our conversations and how his identity was shaped in part by having a father who was German. Wayne also shared with me his own struggles as a student and I learned that despite being a seasoned teacher, holding an undergraduate degree, and working toward a graduate degree, Wayne did not have a high school diploma. He suggested that his affinity for Social Studies 33 students, the non-academic stream, resulted from the challenges he faced in high school. Like Greg, Wayne and I knew each other prior to his participation in my research project, having met in a graduate course at the university. Wayne had spent most of his teaching career at a large, fairly homogenous high school in one of the bedroom communities of Edmonton but had recently been seconded to Alberta Learning for a two-year period. With over twenty years of high school teaching experience, Wayne's commitment to teaching and his passion for social studies made him an excellent person to include in my research. I felt that Wayne would be willing to engage in genuine dialogue and self-reflection and I was not disappointed.

When Some Speak and Others are Silent

I have been spending quite a bit of time trying to recall meaningful moments in social studies classes when I was a student in school. While such memories are at times elusive, I have no trouble remembering the individuals who taught me social studies from grade one to grade 12. Without exception every one of these teachers was white,

and from grade eight on, every one of these teachers was male. As a student I never really questioned the lack of ethnocultural diversity amongst my social studies teachers. It was only when I became a social studies teacher myself and became more aware of equity issues in education that I began to notice what a homogenous group social studies teachers are.

Despite my best efforts, I was unable to include a non-white teacher in my study. While I was frustrated by this failure, I was not surprised, for it reflects the demographic reality of high school social studies in Alberta. At a recent Alberta social studies conference in Edmonton, I took care to pay attention to the teachers around me. In the large ballroom where the keynote speeches were held and the meals served, I counted less than a dozen people of colour, four of whom were Aboriginal, one who was African-Canadian, and the remainder Asian. Almost all of the people in the room were white, and the men far outnumbered the women. The homogeneity of social studies teachers is a reality not reflected in classrooms throughout Alberta however, where diverse student populations abound.

According to Ben Levin (2000), "we increasingly recognize the importance of diversity in our population, yet struggle with how to accommodate that diversity in our institutions" (p. 5). Levin's observation mirrors my own concern that as a group, social studies teachers do not mirror the diversity of our students. On one level we want our teachers to be as varied as our students, but not enough resources are committed to ensuring that teacher education programs attract students from many ethnocultural backgrounds. In the social studies curriculum and instruction classes I have taught at the university, there is limited ethnocultural diversity amongst the students. Without exception, there were never more than four students of colour in classes of approximately thirty students. Not once did I teach any African Canadian or South Asian students. So we find ourselves in a situation where few teachers of colour are teaching students a curriculum that is theoretically committed to valuing and promoting diversity. In many respects then, that the teachers in my study are all white is simply a reflection of the social studies community in Alberta.

I also feel it is necessary to comment on my relationship with my participants (with the exception of Denis) prior to beginning the study. Conventional notions of objectivity in research might require that I not have a prior relationship with the research subjects. However, my relationships with the majority of the participants permitted us to begin our

conversations with a familiarity that fostered openness and understanding. Jardine (2000) maintains that hermeneutics "is not founded upon the separation of researchers from the earthly life they live or the lives that are the topics of their research" (p. 105). The two are interconnected and my knowledge of my research participants reminded me always of this interconnection. The experiences and moments we shared prior to the research allowed me to know these teachers not as subjects, or even "topics" of research but as participants in understanding. We cannot separate the life from the person when we know both nor should we want to. Rather, deeper understanding in a hermeneutic and feminist sense becomes more possible when research embraces individuals in all their totality as participants rather than subjects.

Knowing my participants allowed me a deeper understanding of their insights and comments. It also fostered a connectedness that might not otherwise have existed and created spaces for *aporias* to emerge. *Aporias*, according to Smits (1997) are perplexing difficulties that when stated offer ways to acknowledge the difficulties and doubts that consume us. When two people have knowledge of each other, if even just a little, *aporias* have the potential to be less threatening and more easily identified. When two people have no knowledge of each other and are coming together in conversation for the first time, it is possible that the difficulties that consume us will remain silent, unstated, and safely tucked away.

In the case of Denis, who I did not know prior to the research, I found myself having to work hard to create a connection, a commonality that would sustain our conversations and the topics we explored. Often, I relied on the chatter that Feldman is so critical of at the beginning of each of our conversation in order to create a comfortable and open space for conversation. As I noted in Chapter 3, chatter or informal talk is intended to establish familiarity between people. It provides a vehicle through which lived experiences are revealed as each person comes to know the other. In the context of my research, chatter also becomes a means of attending to the multi-layered narratives that Smits (1997) speaks about within hermeneutics. Chatter represents the first and most obvious layer, revealing what we as individuals find most salient about our lives and experiences . I learned about Denis this way. I learned about his family, his children, his likes and dislikes, his passions, all of which contribute to the way he identifies himself as a person and as a teacher. These pieces of information were invaluable to our

conversations as I used them time and again when we came to lulls in the conversation or had difficulty moving forward. With Lois, Carol, Greg and Wayne, our familiarity with one another created spaces for deep and sustained reflection almost immediately. We did not have to spend the time getting to know each other; instead we could spend the time exploring the topics that emerged through our conversations and acknowledging the difficulties or aporias that enveloped us. Our familiarity created a degree of trust that influenced both the direction and the level of self-disclosure throughout the conversations (Cowan, 1994). With Denis, I always worried whether he trusted me as a researcher, and if he trusted my intentions. Because of this, I believe I was more cautious in my own speech, afraid of alienating Denis or offending him on some level. With the others, these concerns never materialized.

Beginning to Talk: Shaping the Conversations

Not so long ago, I had a phone call from a research company that had been hired to assess public sentiment on electricity deregulation in Alberta. I agreed to participate by answering a series of pre-determined questions and pre-determined responses. The more questions I was asked to answer, the more frustrated I became with the narrow and limited possibilities for response. I expressed my frustration to the woman from the research company, and while she agreed with my concerns, she was unable to make any changes to the survey. I finished the survey but was dissatisfied with my responses and the process for understanding deregulation that had been imposed on me. The questions were closed and the answers were fixed. Because of this, were the possibilities for any kind of heightened understanding virtually destroyed?

Both philosophical hermeneutics and feminist theory express shared commitments to questioning what we think we know and each speaks about the importance of keeping the question open. In his book *Truth and Method*, Gadamer states "the essence of the question is to open up possibilities and keep them open" (p. 299). For Gadamer (1988), "deciding the question is the path to knowledge" (p. 364) insofar as the question opens up the possibilities of meaning. Smits (1997) reminds us that hermeneutics grants precedence to questioning, to a sustained search for questions about meaning and Jardine (1998) suggests that inquiry begins by being "struck" by something (p. 40). Questions emerge as we are pulled into the inquiry through our desire for understanding.

It is important that understanding be viewed not as the "search for consent but the unpacking of layers of distortion" (Leonardo, 2003, p. 333). When the purpose of research is to arrive at consent, particularly through the use of closed sets of questions

that often make offering an array of responses difficult, the possibilities for understanding are eroded. Jardine (2000) speaks about this phenomenon as "neutering understanding" (p. 116) when method is used as a tool for perpetuating particular ways of thinking and fostering consent.

The use of the word "neuter" in this context is an interesting one, for it implies a sterilization of knowledge. Sterilization in turn implies an absence of something, ridding us of undesirable elements. When we neuter understanding, we are ridding it of dis-ease, ridding it of all that might make us uncomfortable or that might contaminate our ways of thinking. We are neutralizing it, making it neutral. Yet understanding is never neutral, never free of culture or the traditions in which it was born. Smits (1997) speaks about this as the *aporia* of reproduction. While there must be a shared commitment to questions, the questions must not be asked to generate predictable answers; rather, they should be asked as a means of exploring our diverse situations and experiences (deVault, 1999).

Not wanting to "neuter understanding" in my own research, I attempted to construct groups of questions to guide the research but not direct it. The first set reflects what I have been "struck by" in social studies education, what I have found questionable, and the second set reflects what I hoped teachers would unearth as we engaged in our conversations. Early on in my doctoral work I began to wonder how we construct citizenship in social studies based partly on curricular content, but also on teachers' understandings of what it means to teach for citizenship. What then is questionable about citizenship? I also began to wonder if there was a relationship between liberal democratic understandings of citizenship, which inform curriculum, and issues of race, culture and gender in social studies content as I discussed in Chapter 2. If there was indeed a relationship, as I suspected there was, were teachers thinking about it? What then is questionable about teaching citizenship in secondary school social studies? These are the questions that brought me to the research but by no means did I limit my conversations with teachers to an exploration of only these questions.

Depending on the directions that the conversations took, multiple questions emerged throughout the study. While there were some commonalities amongst conversations in terms of the direction they took, each conversation represents a particular exploration

and offers a unique perspective. That said I needed a place to begin our conversations so I considered it necessary to pose some initial questions to facilitate dialogue. Ellis (1998) reminds us of the importance of beginning interpretive inquiry with "an openness to behold or contemplate life in its wholeness and complexity" (p.19) and that entry questions must "solicit genuine engagement" (p.18). But what does it mean to "solicit genuine engagement?" My understanding of the phrase is that participants must feel a part of the research and that it must resonate with them so they are drawn into the conversations. . Further, I believe that to solicit genuine engagement participants must be able to see themselves in the questions, to bring something personal to their responses. The questions should not be simple, nor should they generate formulaic answers. There must be room for ambiguity and uncertainty because genuine engagement is sometimes messy, sometimes uncomfortable, and always personal.

When we began our conversations, I asked each participant to share with me what had brought him or her to teach social studies and I in turn shared what had brought me to teach social studies. As well, I asked each participant to discuss how he or she understood the concept of citizenship in the context of social studies. Rather than beginning the conversations with an open ended prompt, asking each participant to tell me about teaching social studies, I chose instead to focus the conversation by asking the following questions:

1. What brought you to teach social studies?
2. What does citizenship education mean to you in the context of teaching social studies?
3. What do you find questionable about social studies and its goal of citizenship?

These are not simple questions that generate one or two sentence responses. Rather, they require thought and reflection. While the questions were general enough to allow the conversations to take on lives of their own, they were not impossible for participants to respond to. They created spaces for participants to bring their particular perspectives to the research in a genuine way and gave birth to a multitude of insights, tensions, and new questions for inquiry.

The Conversations Take Shape

Prior to beginning my research, I wondered about the kind of conversations that would take place and how they might look given my use of philosophical hermeneutics and feminist theory. There was never any doubt in my mind that I needed to meet with each participant more than once if I was truly committed to the principles of hermeneutic inquiry. Ellis (1998) speaks about this as the loop or spiral of research. Each loop must be entered with a question(s), which is then re-framed as we enter subsequent loops. What we learn in each spiral or loop may lead us in new directions over the course of the study. Martin Heidegger, (1927) in his book *Being and Time,* refers to such occurrences as "hermeneutic uncoverings" and suggests that they can provide the research with a focus and purpose not previously considered. For Ellis, uncoverings are a crucial element of the inquiry for "if no surprises occur, we either do not yet 'see' what can be uncovered, or we have not yet approached the research participant or situation in a way that respects the way it can show itself" (p. 23).

Given the importance of uncoverings in inquiry, I realized that I would have to engage in more than one conversation with each participant. A single conversation only begins the process of inquiry. Building on the insights and tensions that emerge in the first conversation each subsequent conversation represents new opportunities for hermeneutic uncoverings or surprises, which, as Ellis (1998) points out, are the essence of interpretive inquiry (p.23). My decision to meet with each of the teachers three times over the course of a school semester reflects this realization. The first conversation served as a starting point, a beginning of our thinking around the questions, the second conversation as an opportunity to delve further into our understandings and the assumptions that shaped them and the third conversation as a means through which deeper understandings or uncoverings revealed themselves. It was also a decision based partly on realities of teachers' lives, for in my initial attempts to solicit participation, I asked teachers what they felt was a reasonable amount of time that they could commit. Without exception, all of the teachers thought that four meetings would be too much and two meetings not enough. We settled on three meetings over a five-month period in the second semester of the school year. My collaboration with the teachers in determining some of the research processes reflects my desire for participants to feel some ownership of the project. Typically, I met with each participant in five-week intervals,

providing me with enough time in between meetings to transcribe each conversation and identify what I perceived as initial emergent issues and tensions.

Once I had identified the issues and tensions arising from individual conversations, I recorded these with specific statements from the conversations to support my identification. I also posed new questions for discussion that I felt supported the issues and tensions and would provide initial direction to the following conversation. These I emailed to each participant at least five days prior to our next meeting so each of us would have time for individual reflection and contemplation. This follows Carson's (1986) analysis of conversation whereby insights related to the research topic are focused on raising further questions for discussion.

Giving Birth to Meanings

In many respects the conversations I engaged in with each participant is very much like the act of giving birth in a physical sense. When I had my daughter two years ago, I had no idea what to expect despite reading as many books on the topic as I could lay my hands on, and listening to the insights of women who had the experience that I lacked. The uncertainty and ambiguity I experienced leading up to the birth of my daughter is no different from the uncertainty and ambiguity surrounding each conversation before it began. I did not know what direction it would take, I had no sense of what insights might emerge, nor did I imagine that we would simply reproduce existing understanding.

Before Ayla was born, throughout my thirty-six hours of labour, I did not know what direction the birthing process would take either. Would I have a relatively easy time, would intervention be needed, what degree of pain would I feel and would I be able to manage it? I also did not know how I would feel physically, mentally or emotionally. What I was sure about was the unlimited possibilities that awaited me during and after the birth of my daughter. It was an exciting time despite, or perhaps even because of not knowing what to expect.

Each stage of labour was an "uncovering" in the sense that I learned something I had not anticipated. The actual process of giving birth was the biggest "uncovering" of all and when the doctor passed me my daughter....

What I was "struck" by as I held Ayla for the first time was that my husband and I together had created a unique little person who would constantly surprise and amaze us in the days to come. Similarly, my conversations with teachers represented not a reproduction of meaning but a production of new and creative understandings that would constantly amaze me over the course of our research.

For me, the birthing analogy is a powerful one for it speaks to so many of the possibilities that abound when we are open to them. No two experiences of giving birth are the same, just as no two experiences of the world are the same and no two conversations in my research were the same. When I look at Ayla, I see the world in a new way, beginning the first time I held her. No book could have prepared me for such a shift, and no book could have prepared me for the challenges that lay ahead. Likewise, no amount of reading or planning could have fully prepared me for the shape my conversations with teachers took or for the understandings that emerged through our talks together, irrevocably changing my way of understanding the possibilities and limitations of social studies.

Listening for New Understandings

Anytime we engage in conversations as a means of getting at knowledge and opening up understanding, we need to consider the importance of listening. According to Jim Garrison (1996) "Western modernity's stress on the rational self-assertion of the autonomous individual who has the right to speak and be heard, ironically enough, devalues listening and the listener" (p. 432). For Garrison, it is essential that the listener and listening be active elements in research. He is critical of theories of listening that fail to do this and finds that Gadamer's hermeneutics of listening is incomplete and ambiguous. Garrison suggests that Gadamer has little to say about listening beyond the I-Thou relationship. In this relationship, states Garrison, tension is produced through the struggle for mutual recognition, resulting in relations of unequal power depending upon how much recognition is desired by each person (p. 435). His sense that listening must be an active part of dialogue is an important one, particularly if we hope for the "uncoverings" that Heidegger speaks of. For Ellsworth (1997) listening is about recognizing that the person I am talking with is not necessarily the person I imagined. It is through the act of listening that I am able to see the person in a new light, to really explore thinking about social studies.

Because of this I attempted to carefully listen to my participants' words and my own words throughout our conversations. I audio taped every conversation and transcribed each one myself so that I would have the opportunity to re-listen and re-think the person and his or her expression of words and ideas. Once the transcribing was completed, I listened to each conversation an additional time, again for the purpose of re-thinking what was said and what I thought was said. I also listened carefully to how ideas were expressed and tensions produced, noting instances of difficulty and uncertainty as evidenced by pauses in the conversation or struggles in expression.

If we hope to listen well, then we have to actively endeavor to understand another's meaning in his or her terms (Garrison, 1996). This means careful attention to the imposition of our own understandings on the words of another. It also requires an awareness of the place that I am speaking from in relation to the place that the other is speaking from. Patti Lather (1998) reminds us "we cannot not know the non-innocence of language and the weight of culture in our portrayals of the world" (p. 4). I am acutely aware of this and it has been part of my process, one that I have struggled with throughout the research. Because of our prejudices and our locations in history, "the weight of culture" in our understanding, it is impossible to listen impartially. Yet it is possible to recognize how our impartiality colours our listening. Remaining open to the act of listening and my own role as listener has been necessary even when it has meant living with confusion and uncertainty throughout the inquiry.

The Circle of Interpretation

Philosophical hermeneutics reminds us that understanding is not a linear process, nor is there an end point when we arrive at complete understanding of the whole. Rather, in the hermeneutic tradition, understanding has a circular structure. The hermeneutic circle depends upon our fore-structures of understanding shaped largely by our place in the world. Understanding always occurs within particular contexts, so to have some understanding of the whole, there must necessarily be some understanding of the parts that constitute the whole. Gallagher (1992) describes the hermeneutic circle as follows:

> The knowledge which we already have of the whole, constituted in our prepedictive experience, impacts on the constitution of the meaning of any particular thing, while the meaning of any particular thing adds to or reshapes our knowledge of the whole and will go on to condition our subsequent understanding (p. 60).

The relationship Gallagher describes between our understanding of the whole and its parts creates a fluid and shifting reality. For Gallagher, understanding lives in a circular tension between what we find familiar and what we find strange. Within the hermeneutic circle, familiarity and strangeness interact to expand the circle and our own understandings. When we return to the beginning of the circle, it is not the same place we started from. It has been changed by our particular understandings, which in turn have altered our original understanding of the whole (Cowan, 1994).

The focus of interpretation has an initial meaning or meanings for us when we begin the process of inquiry, but it gains additional meanings exactly because we are engaging in interpretation. For Paul Ricoeur (1967), "hermeneutics proceeds from a prior understanding of the very thing that it tries to understand by interpreting it" (p. 352). To return to my birthing analogy, the process of giving birth proceeds with some understandings of the process itself. My daughter will be born when I am 10 centimeters dilated and my contractions are intense, and close together. She will be born when I push her out of the birth canal in the last moments of labour. While I thought I understood the end result of the whole process, the birth of my daughter, I did not understand how particular elements of the process would shape the whole.

Thus, my understanding of the birthing process was changed as a result of the experience of giving birth. The same may be said of my understandings of citizenship when I began the process of inquiry with my five teacher participants. I had particular understanding of citizenship as a concept in the context of social studies curriculum, based on my own prejudices and experiences of the world. But this understanding shifted and changed as it encountered other understandings both similar to and different from my own. This is precisely what Gallagher is referring to when he speaks of the circular tension of understanding. It also speaks to Gadamer's fusion of horizons as we learn to live within this tension, to embrace the familiar and the strange, and to create new perspectives from the mediation of differing perspectives. Revisiting each conversation with my participants afforded me the opportunity to identify the tensions that emerged in our conversations and to reflect on these tensions as limitations of our previous perspectives and possibilities for new understandings of citizenship in social studies education. I deal with this more fully in Chapter 5 in my discussion of the insights and tensions of each of the conversations with respect to questions of

citizenship. The hermeneutic circle, as an integral part of interpretive inquiry, embodies the fluidity of meaning and the shifting nature of understanding which is in turn embodied by the participants, Lois, Carol, Denis, Greg, Wayne and myself as we explored our own understandings of citizenship and social studies education.

Understandings

Before beginning my research, it had not occurred to me that the multiple and shifting worlds that women embody would have any impact on who would be able to participate in my research and who would not. Nor did it occur to me that the only women who would become involved in my research would be women without children. Despite all of my reading of feminist scholarship, and my awareness of the dichotomies inherent in public and private spaces, I still expected that I would have little trouble finding women willing to contribute to my research.

In many respects, I have learned from this. It speaks to the fallacy of easy access to women as research participants noted by Reay (1995). It is also a tangible example of the realities of citizenship for women who attempt to navigate work and home, family and profession. For these women, non-participation in research projects, political activities, and so on, is as much about socially imposed structures as it is about personal choice. "Listening" for such silences informs an understanding of the way that citizenship is constructed and conferred in contemporary society.

That said each of my participants brought a unique perspective to my research and through our conversations, my own understandings of citizenship and social studies shifted and changed. What was questionable about citizenship prior to the research remains questionable, but in ways that are different from when we began. The hermeneutic openness of the question informed my own decision to ask questions of my participants as a means of evoking dialogue rather than as a means of directing the research. Keeping the questions open created the spaces needed for "uncoverings" or surprises, which in turn provide spaces for meaning to come forth. Much like the process of giving birth, the process of interpretive inquiry represents new possibilities and new ways of thinking about the word through a sharing of insights and the creation of tensions that arise when people come together in conversation and in critique.

Chapter 5:
Questions of Citizenship

In the search for meaning, philosophical hermeneutics realizes the importance of a continual searching for questions (Smits, 1997). In this search, the goal is not to formulate definitive answers to questions; rather through keeping the questions of inquiry open, understandings emerge as fluid, shifting, evolving. With this in mind, I have organized the discussion that follows around questions and understandings that emerged as I engaged in conversations with each of my five participants and I have used feminism as a critical hermeneutic in my interpretations of meanings. Citizenship, culture and gender provide a structure for the emergence of questions and ensuing understandings. Thus, each of the following three chapters are organized accordingly, based on my conversations with Denis, Wayne, Greg, Lois and Carol respectively. Each chapter reflects my own understandings of the questions of inquiry that emerged through a continual process of reflection, interpretation, and re-interpretation as I encountered the texts of discussion several times over the course of the research and my writing about it. The decision to focus on one participant at a time is deliberate and intended to honour the individual voices, perspectives and experiences that each person brought to this study while at the same time remembering that the search for meaning is a collaborative process. What follows is an account of the interplay between questions and understandings in the teaching of social studies and the pursuit of meaning that emerged through this research and my own writing about it.

Visions of Citizenship

A normative vision of social studies education accepts that students become citizens through and within the process of schooling. It is to the schools that society has historically turned for the "production" of good citizens, and social studies, more than any other subject has been paramount in this task. In my own process of learning to teach social studies, citizenship was a taken for granted goal, not often discussed, and even less often understood. As a beginning teacher, I thought of "responsible citizenship" in the most rudimentary way. Responsible meant voting, writing letters, obeying the laws of the land, and at the very least, understanding the structure of Canadian Government. In the Alberta Program of Studies for social studies, responsible citizenship was constructed as "understanding the role, rights and responsibilities of a citizen in a

democratic society" and "participating constructively in the democratic process by making rational decisions" (2000, p.3). Thus my understanding of responsible citizenship was not so different from the Program of Studies. In my early years of teaching, I was more concerned with getting through required content and writing creative lesson plans than I was about exploring the meanings of citizenship on my own or with my students.

My thinking about citizenship has evolved and expanded over the years, largely because of my own desire to approach social studies differently having been influenced by feminist critiques of education. My thinking is ever changing, constantly influenced by my own reflection, reading, writing, and conversations with others. When I sat down with my first research participant, Denis, in January 2003, I expected that our understandings of citizenship would be quite different, given our historical circumstances and fore-structures of understanding. I imagined that his Francophone roots and the normative visions of citizenship education in curriculum documents would influence Denis' thinking. However, when I went back through the transcripts of our conversations, there was a flicker of something else in Denis' comments, other ways of thinking about citizenship, talking about it, understanding it. As I read, and re-read the transcripts, the blurry image in the background of the photo gradually came into focus, the image just outside of the camera's eye began to reveal itself, and what happened for me was an uncovering, a surprise, unanticipated understandings that broadened my thinking about citizenship.

Denis

Questions of Citizenship

What follows is an account of this coming to understand with Denis, the possibilities of citizenship he found in his own teaching of social studies and in his own sense of being a citizen and a teacher. Through our discussion, what emerged for Denis was a sense that as citizens we live in multiple spaces and that the process of becoming a citizen most often begins in the home, the private space of family. However, this process is not limited to the home. It occurs neither in wholly public nor private spaces , but in the intersections of the two.

Citizens are born in both public and private spaces

Jennifer: *What led you to choose social studies?*

Denis: *Umm, because I love social studies, because I'm from a large family and when we were a bit older, we definitely discussed a lot of things.*

Family. I missed this word the first time I went back through the transcripts before our second conversation. Or at least I missed it in the context of citizenship. But for Denis, his love of social studies, his desire to teach a subject rich with the potential for discussion did not come from an experience he associated with his own schooling as a child, but with his memories of and connection to his family.

Jennifer: *What would you say is important, as a social studies teacher, what do you feel is important in terms of teaching social studies content, structure?*

Denis: *Okay, I think social studies permits, in a school setting there's a lot of things, I mean if you look at the program it states for example that, in English do you say responsible citizen?*

Jennifer: *Yeah.*

Denis: *Social studies permits you that even though the family probably has a big role, every aspect of the school has a role in that, but social studies has a great role to play in that aspect.*

Denis understood that citizenship is not exclusively the domain of schools. Rather, he acknowledged the role that the family plays in the creation of citizens, even before students enter social studies classrooms. I missed this the first time through partly because it disguised itself in the discourse of the curriculum document, "responsible citizenship", which is perhaps what I expected to hear. For Denis, family was an important part of how he identified himself, both his family of origin, and his immediate family, so he did not locate citizenship in a purely public space. Rather Denis saw a private dimension to citizenship, one not traditionally considered as a site of civic consciousness. He implicitly understood citizenship to live simultaneously in the realm of school and home, never exclusively in one or the other.

Denis's location of citizenship does not necessarily reveal his understanding of the meaning of citizenship, nor does it disclose what he finds questionable about citizenship

education in social studies. What it does do is suggest that Denis' understandings of citizenship emerged from those elements of his life he perceived as important, family and school. These were precisely the spaces that Denis occupied for most of his waking hours so it is no wonder that they influenced his understanding of citizenship.

Citizenship is the Discovery of Meaning(s)

Even though the first word that Denis used to describe citizenship was "responsible" he did not provide further explanation of what this meant to him. In fact, through our conversations, I came to see that Denis had a much deeper way of thinking about citizenship than as something constructed around the notion of responsible actions. For him, awareness and exploration were integral elements of what democratic citizenship education should be. Thus, **citizenship is the discovery of meaning**. This understanding emerged in part through the following discussion.

Denis: *I think it's very important, not only the knowledge aspect, of knowing what happened with the Second World War, knowing how your government functions, or knowing what happened in history whatever aspect of facts that social studies can teach but also to develop, once you know all of that, to be more open or to be more aware of what's going on. Social studies is the study of life on the planet if you will and it's very important and I think students as they get older, especially in high school, realize how important and how small the planet is. And uh, one example Iraq, what's going on now in North Korea, they're all very interested in what's going on.*

Jennifer: *Are they?*

Denis: *Yes, they are. And social studies. Well, I shouldn't say all. 90% of students. And I think social studies…I don't think biology permits you to have discussions, or math. I say that but I'm sure there are.*

Jennifer: *Well in a different way though right, than social studies?*

Denis: *Social studies, it's always very interesting how easy it is to go off in tangents when we teach socials studies. You start at one point, you've got questions, and all of a sudden you're off. And I actually really enjoy that part.*

In this excerpt, Denis suggested that knowledge alone is not enough for students. What must accompany knowledge is a desire to explore and question that knowledge in order to come to an awareness of an issue or event. He tacitly saw the power of questions and questioning in learning and in citizenship education. To be a

citizen, one must be prepared to question, to move in new and different directions as a learner. Denis used the word "tangent" to refer to what I understand as exploration, the search for meaning, the cultivation of understanding in the dialogic spaces of his social studies classroom. Thus, for Denis, the desire for critical exploration is a cornerstone of how he imagines students should enact their citizenship within and beyond school. Students' desire to discover meaning then becomes a cornerstone of what it means to be a citizen.

But where does this desire come from? Denis believed that it should be intrinsic rather than extrinsic, that students should be motivated to explore issues and topics of social importance, like homelessness or poverty, because of their human element. Regardless of whether students themselves feel directly affected, as citizens they have a "responsibility" to critically engage with matters of humanity. The notion of compassion wraps itself around citizenship and the concept of "responsible" citizenship takes on a whole new meaning. No longer is responsible caught up in the political discourse of the curriculum and measured by voting or paying taxes. Instead, responsibility takes on a much more embodied quality. From our conversations came the understanding that citizenship should be as much about compassion as rationality, as much about engaging with the world as living in it, as much about discovering new meaning(s) as acknowledging existing meaning(s). Social studies classrooms, suggested Denis, are spaces where students can really learn to care about the world.

Citizenship is Consumption of Information

A contradiction emerged however as our conversation progressed. The more we talked, the more emphasis Denis placed on information to be tested on the final (diploma) exam as opposed to information that would better help students to live in the world. The way that Denis understood citizenship altered in relation to the ever-present reality of diploma exams, student achievement, and teacher results. Citizenship became much more about **the consumption of information**, both socio-cultural and curricular, than awareness and exploration through questioning what we think we know.

Denis: *I've been told, you know politely but one thing I've found is that every single unit that I've prepared I would take these exams that I had from 1990 in the last 10 – 12 years and basically photocopy and make exams on each chapter, on each topic that I cover. So the kids got to write quite*

a few multiple-choice questions. But the thing is, I got to a point too where now I know, in the second semester I'll teach it again, and I realize that I spent time on things that because it was the first time, most often I was a week in front of the students and now, I've got all my exams in hand, you know and I'll probably change some. I know what's on the exams you know and I think sadly enough I will put more emphasis on things that I know are on the exam rather then you know homelessness in Edmonton or the lack of room for homeless people in Edmonton. Things that come up and I won't spend much time. It's more important that I cover checks and balances in the U.S. you know, or... and that's sad.

Teaching Social Studies 30 for the first time, Denis found himself caught in a much messier place than he imagined. When I first read through the transcripts of our conversations, I came to see Denis as a teacher complicit in teaching to the diploma exam, rather than really challenging his students to think. I responded to him on the basis of this interpretation, but thinking back to my first time teaching Social Studies 30 I recall the pressures of the diploma exam that were larger than life and ever present in my mind and the minds of the students. Denis was saddened through his realization that in teaching to the exam, he was giving up issues and topics potentially meaningful to students. In this context, social studies became the consumption of particular information intended to get students past (and passing) the diploma exam.

Citizenship is Performance

Rather than framing Denis within the lens of complicity, however, I have come to see him as a teacher living in tension, caught between what he believes in and what he finds himself doing, as he navigates the messiness of social studies. Leonardo (2003) notes that reality is always a little bit fuzzy and ambiguous, and in the case of Denis, his reality as a teacher teaching Social Studies 30 very much mirrors this perception. On the one hand, Denis' teaching world is shaped by the diploma exam, on the other hand, his reality is journeying with his students toward the discovery of meaning(s) and understanding(s.) This journey is not entirely sacrificed in the name of the diploma exam, but it is interrupted and often subjugated in the gaze of the exam.

Denis: *Whether you like it or not, that exam is there. We have a superintendent who analyzes the results with a magnifying glass and you're aware if you're several points below or above it."*

Feeling scrutinized by his superintendent, Denis seemed to hold himself personally accountability for his students' scores on the exam, suggesting a blurring of lines between student results and teacher results. He found himself performing for the exam and to the exam. In this respect, the understanding that emerged through this discussion was that **citizenship is a performance.**

In the spaces of his social studies classroom, Denis was constructing his own sense of citizenship vis-à-vis the choices he made as a teacher. Returning for a moment to the notion of "responsible" citizenship, Denis was caught between his responsibility to get students through the exam and his responsibility to liberate them from the constraints imposed by the exam. He shared with me that he found himself constantly counting the number of classes he had left before the diploma exam, where he was at with his students, and where he felt he needed to be. As well, the exam seemed to take on a larger than life persona, ever present in Denis' thoughts and actions.

Denis: *We spend quite a bit of time preparing for the essay…I counted this morning, this is ridiculous, I've never done this in social 10, but this morning, I counted. In the second semester I've got ninety-eight social studies classes, sixty-five minutes, in my semester, so I figured out, I tried to figure out, okay, political systems, economic systems, 20th century, and tried to give myself dates where I have to meet you know, I've never done this in ten.*

Denis: *We'll start talking about something and then all of a sudden, and then I'll stop and say, oh, I'm going to far, always because I have the exam at the back of my mind. The school will pretty soon give a letter saying this is your school average, this is the teacher average, this is the provincial average – and even if I have a principal who might say, don't worry, don't worry, I know he'll be worried about where we are in relation to the rest of the province.*

Because of this desire for performance on the diploma exam, Denis found himself performing choices as a teacher, and ultimately as a citizen "responsible" for the education of young people. There is nothing straightforward about this performance, no script to follow, no lines to be memorized and movements to be blocked. The most constant and unyielding aspect of the performance is the predictability of the exam and the knowledge that so much is at stake because of it, including the possibilities for compassionate and embodied citizenship. In many respects, the diploma exam constructs citizenship as an outcome-based performance, measurable and graded,

whereas the curriculum document constructs citizenship in a much more ambiguous way insofar as students as citizens "are knowledgeable, purposeful, and make responsible choices" (Alberta Program of Studies, 2000, p. 3). What emerges is a doubled sense of the public nature of citizenship. On the one hand is citizenship as product where there is a clearly identifiable measure of citizenship based upon mastery of a body of knowledge and on the other is citizenship as process whereby knowledge is embodied through the decisions and choices that individuals make in public spaces.

Wayne

Questions of Citizenship

Since Wayne and I had a familiarity arising from our earlier encounters in graduate level courses at the University, we began our conversations with an ease and comfort that allowed us to immediately engage questions of citizenship, culture and gender in the spaces of social studies. As with Denis, I began by asking Wayne to communicate with me what he believed had brought him to teach social studies. He shared with me a story of his high school social studies teacher, Mr. H, and how this individual was able to "make social studies come alive". Wayne remembered Mr. H as a teacher who refused to give up on students who had been abandoned by other teachers, who "actually engaged students", "cared about other students who didn't make the grade". Since Wayne saw himself as one of these students, his experiences in Mr. H's class influenced his decision to become a social studies teacher. In Wayne's own teaching he was conscious of the importance of making connections and engaging students with social studies material, just as Mr. H had done so many years ago.

Citizenship is living connections with others

Because of his own experiences in social studies classes and his desire to be the kind of teacher that Mr. H. was, Wayne understood **citizenship as living connections with others**.

Wayne: *If you want to do something in your life, connect with people. This is the model that I chose to do. And so I think it's because of [Mr. H's] interaction and his connection to kids and how he engaged them and really cared about them and wasn't the deliverer of curriculum, but more the facilitator of it if you like, and to try to get kids engaged in education.*

The desire to engage students with their own learning and connect with them in social studies encourages students to do the same in the world outside of the classroom. It is possible that when students leave school, the intangible lessons they learned in such classrooms motivate them to interact in more meaningful and holistic ways. What I mean by this is that students come to see that citizenship is not a disconnected way of being in the world; rather, connecting with people and building positive relationships come to be cornerstones of what it means to be a citizen in the world and of the world. This was the understanding that drew Wayne to social studies education and informed his own classroom practice and way of being in the world.

Wayne also saw connections in terms of linking the various disciplines that shape social studies as a means of illustrating for students the interconnectedness of the world beyond the school. I am reminded here of Jardine's (1998) notion of "keeping the world open" (p.1). Interconnections speak to the complexity and openness of living in the world when we are attuned to the multifaceted relationships among people, places, and environment. For Wayne, an issues centred curriculum and the questions such a curriculum may evoke is a vehicle for "keeping the world open".

Wayne: *But I also think it goes, by narrowing it to just history, or geography or economics you're missing an opportunity, um, to show and to teach kids that the world isn't separate and they very well know that we're all connected in some way and those disciplines connect us in some way. It allows curriculums, and teachers, and students to focus on an issue centred curriculum rather than a knowledge based or content heavy if you like.*

The prevalence of connections, both human and conceptual, in Wayne's discussion of social studies suggests that his thinking about citizenship has already surpassed the existing liberal democratic discourse on individualism. Social studies may be influenced by this discourse, but Wayne was able to see beyond it, as he spoke of other possibilities for citizenship education.

Citizenship is fluid, adaptable, and dynamic

When we began to explicitly discuss citizenship in social studies, I expected that Wayne would offer a unique perspective as I had already encountered his ability to think critically and creatively on a number of occasions. He had challenged my own thinking

in the past and I looked forward to expanding my own understandings in dialogue with Wayne.

Jennifer: *Tell me what your perceptions of what you think citizenship is are. Because I'm interested in that. What makes a responsible citizen?*

Wayne: *Okay. Umm…(reflective silence). Inclusive, that would be my first. Genuinely inclusive not lip service inclusive. I don't think citizenship is a static term, it's living. I think we treat it as a noun if you like and I don't think it is a noun. I think it has to be a verb. And that's a huge shift – it's taken me awhile to make that shift. Starting to look at citizenship as a living, interactive kind of process that's ongoing. So I think one of the problems is when we try and define citizenship and we try and put it in a box, I don't think any box is big enough.*

Treating citizenship as verb, a living term, suggests again that students in social studies classes must engage with the world in an active and genuine way. Wayne saw the difficulties of reconceptualizing citizenship in a curriculum document that attempts to provide a definition of citizenship, which is limited and limiting. His suggestion that inclusivity is paid lip service in social studies speaks to the difficulties he perceived in stepping outside the box of "responsible citizenship". Yet, despite these difficulties, the spaces exist in social studies to reimagine **citizenship as fluid, adaptable and dynamic**. Like Denis, Wayne found himself living in a space of tension between how the curriculum prescribes citizenship in social studies, and how he was able to negotiate his own understandings of it in this context.

Wayne acknowledged the difficulties of re-imagining citizenship in light of the realities of the diploma exam. He believed that the exam had become the "de facto" curriculum for many teachers who chose to focus on the learning of discrete pieces of information, disconnected and divorced from the lives of students. Treating citizenship as a living term, as fluid and dynamic, was not fostered by a multiple-choice exam that, according to Wayne, had "turned into a knowledge based assessment tool". Instead, when the diploma exam is treated as the "de facto curriculum," citizenship becomes static and predicable. Students may focus their energies on preparing for the exam and forget that another world exists. If they are aware of this other world, it is in a more limited way, closing the world of social studies to engaged and connected citizenship.

Social studies fosters citizenship as the path of least resistance

The more Wayne and I spoke about citizenship in social studies, the more we talked about the notion of **citizenship as acceptance, as the path of least resistance**, though not necessarily in those terms. At the time of our second conversation, America had just declared war on Iraq and prominent individuals speaking up against the war were being sanctioned in not so subtle ways.

Wayne: *It's interesting because we're not allowed that [single event caused war in Iraq] perspective now. In the United States with the Dixie Chicks and all that, you don't speak up. You can get fired. A guy got fired the other day by suggesting that America shouldn't be there. He lost his job and had to publicly apologize...and that's what we should be talking about with students.*

Wayne felt that as citizens we have a responsibility to speak up about injustices but that we often accept the status quo because it is the path that seems safest. Disparate voices may choose to be quiet or quieted in the midst of political debate because to do otherwise makes these voices vulnerable to criticism and sanction. Wayne wondered whether social studies created spaces for students to speak up in opposition to a dominant point of view and concluded that it very much depended upon the teacher. For students, it is often easier to accept the knowledge that is disseminated to them in social studies classes rather than engaging in a critique of the information or exploring its complexity. In the gaze of the diploma exam, students may be constructed as passive receptacles of information, learning what they have to do to get by and to get through (Couture, 2000). Because of this, they may choose the path of least resistance, constructing their sense of what it means to be a citizen accordingly, particularly if they regard the alternative as fraught with tension and anxiety. Despite acknowledging that citizenship is often about the path of least resistance, Wayne felt strongly that it should be about pushing the envelope, about resistance if you will, to dominant points of view. Inherent in this discussion is the tension between what Wayne imagined citizenship might be in social studies and how he believed it was taken up by teachers and students.

As our second conversation progressed, Wayne and I discussed the connection between citizenship in social studies and citizenship in relation to the nation. The

insights Wayne offered emerged from a question I posed regarding where the need to define citizenship originated.

Jennifer: *So my questions is where does the need to define citizenship, to fit it in a box, originate from? Because we see that I think, historically, with social studies, from its inception. And what would the implications of this be for curriculum?*

Wayne: *Yeah, I think the answer to that question is first that we define what is citizenship, and I think in the twentieth century we define citizenship as nationalism, and a nation, a citizen of a nation, we can be citizens of communities, we define ourselves as, in a global context we define ourselves in terms of nationhood, in terms of state, defined boundaries, people that share some values and I think that's very European once again going back to guys like Granatstein who believe that that whole concept of nationhood or nationalism is based on tribalism. We share the same bonds through blood and language, those kinds of things. And I think that's where it originates, that's where it comes from. But what are the implications for the curriculum?*

Jennifer: *Right, of this need to fit it in a box? What does that do to curriculum?*

Wayne: *Well, traditionally in curriculum it has meant that there is a box, in terms of citizenship, that we define citizenship for many years in this country, we define citizenship in terms of European heritage. Now that changed over a period of time in the twentieth century, where we had a large immigration factor and all of a sudden, Eastern Europeans are considered citizens, and Japanese, Chinese, Aboriginals were not. And then with the constitutional rights of the Francophones, this question of citizenship comes up with them all the time. What is citizenship and who is a citizen and I think they're still fighting that battle because [in some communities in Canada] they always used to be saying, gee, why can't they be just like us? When you say that statement, what you're doing is you're setting up the box. You live in the box and you expect everyone to live in the box with you.*

The possibilities of citizenship are bounded by the nation-state

Despite living within the same borders and locations, we are not equal citizens depending upon our gender, and our cultural and ethnic affiliations. Wayne's comments illustrate a normalizing view of citizenship that defines it always in relation to the nation. Thus, **the possibilities of citizenship are bounded by the nation-state**. As an individual living within a nation, certain rights and privileges are enjoyed but these are not necessarily universally bestowed. Wayne asked the question, who is a citizen? Another question that might be asked is who is not (or has not been) a citizen?

Historically, the nation and its ideologies dictated the definition of citizenship, and in liberal democracies this meant that the discourse of citizenship was caught up in the ideas of rights and duties. In exchange for rights, people, or citizens as they came to be called, would engage in activities intended to support and strengthen the nation (Voet, 1998). Social studies seems to be caught up in this discourse as well, as it attempts to promote a view of universal citizenship, which as I discussed in Chapter 2, is falsely universal. Difference is no longer salient and we become citizens insofar as we belong to a nation. Individuals who do not "belong" to the nation in which they live, inhabit a peculiar space of in-betweeness. As "non-citizens" they do not enjoy the same rights in their new nation as those defined as citizens under the law but they are not without rights altogether. Thus, they find themselves living with ambiguity, living as individuals who are neither static nor fluid, passive nor active. Yet if they are not citizens in a formal sense, then surely they are citizens in an informal sense through the contributions they make to their families and communities. If, in social studies, citizenship is limited to the discourse of the nation, then students may come away with limited understandings of what it means to be a citizen and the possibilities of citizenship beyond the nation (Arnot & Dillabough, 1999; Feinberg, 1998; Kymlicka, 1995; Pateman, 1989).

Citizenship is informed by awareness

Whereas Denis noted the importance of awareness for students, Wayne spoke of the need for teacher awareness within and beyond the social studies curriculum. It became obvious that for Wayne, **citizenship is informed by awareness**. I asked Wayne what his thoughts were on the challenges that existed for teachers wishing to teach social studies through a multiple perspectives approach in the current Program of Studies in Alberta. He was not sure that teachers would deduce that something was missing from the program of studies in terms of other perspectives, but that "if you're a teacher you're looking for a challenge, or one of the challenges might be your own awareness". Wayne wondered where that awareness might come from particularly given the complacency that sometimes sets in after years of teaching, and the fatigue that teachers experience over the course of the year. He noted the lack of opportunity for professional development and the difficulty of taking up complex yet important questions of citizenship and identity given the relative isolation of teachers in their own classrooms.

Over the course of the discussion, Wayne and I both acknowledged that in our own careers as social studies teachers, we too had moments of complacency, moments when it was all we could do to get by. We were left with the question of opening up possibilities for citizenship in light of limited awareness, classroom realities and teacher complacency. It is easy to speak about the need for student awareness in the context of citizenship, recognizing that awareness creates spaces for engagement. However, there is a parallel need for teachers to open up these spaces through their own awareness and desire to act on it. Thus, in social studies, teachers live their citizenship in terms of their engagement with the curriculum, the awareness through which they read it, and how they translate it to classroom practice. Classrooms operate as locations where both teachers and students construct citizenship in relation to their own awareness of the world and the choices they make as a result of this awareness.

Greg

Questions of Citizenship

Because he was in his first year of teaching, Greg seemed more comfortable approaching our conversations from a theoretical location than an experiential one. He was solidly grounded in critical theory, post-structuralism and postmodernism which he had used to inform the writing of his masters thesis in English literature. Greg frequently spoke about the need to explore the concept of identity and the social construction of history with students. For Greg, reading social studies texts was not necessarily about reading the words in the texts, but was about reading the context in which a text had been written to get at its deeper meaning.

Citizenship is a search for deeper meaning

Greg: *The other thing for me is, um, I mean I don't use this terminology with students, but with texts I typically come from a sort of historical materialist point of view and I look at the context in which a story or a poem has been constructed. What were the surrounding conditions and so on? I try and get students to sort of go beyond just the words on the page and consider some of the bigger questions and see where they go from there…I'm not saying what is the author trying to say, but what is the text saying.*

In his own teaching, Greg attempted to move students toward a deeper reading of their textbooks to better understand how they functioned. Like Denis, what emerged in my conversations with Greg was a sense that citizenship must be about exploration or searching; that it is not enough to accept things on a superficial level. In this way, **citizenship as a search for deeper meaning** is the process of coming to understanding. Meaning does not just materialize but is constructed through our own historically effected consciousness, contexts and readings of the text, and the contexts that informed its writing. Greg was concerned that textbooks were often used uncritically in social studies rather than as tools for developing deeper understanding. In many respects there is a parallel here with philosophical hermeneutics insofar as reading a text moves us toward new understandings and new ways of thinking. If citizenship entails an awareness of the world in all its complexities, as Greg and I came to accept in our discussions, then social studies classrooms must be places where students interact with complexities in a sustained and meaningful manner.

Before students are able to critically interact with texts, Greg believed they needed a certain basic level of awareness. He talked about "picking up the subtleties" in the news, in advertising, and in the media generally as a prerequisite to critical thinking, which he suggested was a necessary precursor to deeper understandings.

Greg: *Once you're aware of some of the things that go on you can then say, ah – I understand why they're [advertisers] doing that – they want me to think this. And I mean awareness is the first step toward critical thinking.*

For me, citizenship becomes a matter of being more aware of your personal place and space and the forces that make it, contribute to it, shape it, change it and so on.

Awareness informs citizenship

If students are to be more than passive citizens, Greg believed they need to be aware of the world in which they live and that such **awareness informs citizenship**. Part of being aware requires the ability to identify biases, nuances, and subtle efforts to manipulate thinking. Whereas Denis saw awareness as motivating students to engage in the world, Greg saw awareness as leading toward inclusivity. In social studies, choices are made to include and exclude information in curriculum, which support the existence of a dominant narrative (Noddings, 1992). Greg felt that teachers should talk

with students about the construction of curriculum and question the narrative of social studies, even if this meant entering difficult terrain and making a bit of a mess. The potential for a more inclusive classroom curriculum emerges from such discussions. Awareness from Greg's perspective is more akin to understanding, although he does not speak of it in such terms. In my conversations with Denis, however, awareness seemed to imply merely being informed.

Students can be aware of what is going on in the world, but not necessarily understand it. Here then are two constructions of citizenship very much married to identity. Denis took time every morning to read the paper, to discuss current events with his students, to ensure they knew what was going on in the world. He shared with me that these actions were very much a part of his own upbringing, particularly the political discussions his family entertained around the dinner table. Part of Denis' identity and construction of his own citizenship then is being aware of current events.

Greg, too, identified himself as someone who is aware. However, Greg's sense of awareness was tied to identification of biases. Citizenship as awareness in my conversations with Greg took on a different meaning than with Denis but that is not to suggest that one meaning was better than the other. Rather, each reflects particular fore-structures of understanding and each offers a means of broadening the language of citizenship in social studies. Initially, my impulse was to be critical of Denis' discussion of awareness because I found myself identifying with Greg's way of thinking. Initially, I wrote a whole section in this chapter that offered such a critique and later deleted it because part of the process of interpretive inquiry is recognizing how our own biases inform our reading of texts and conversations. Being in the midst of academia and having a familiarity with its language led me to embrace Greg's thinking more so than Denis'. Upon reflection, I see the value that each presents in opening up the possibilities of citizenship in social studies.

Citizenship as a space of uncertainty

Through my own process of reflection arising from the previous section and the conversations that Greg and I had, I have come to think about **citizenship as a space of uncertainty**. Greg saw social studies as rife with ambiguity and uncertainty even though he felt it pretends the opposite. Rather than seeing this as a detriment, however,

Greg granted that uncertainties presented possibilities for getting at the ambiguities of life which, as Jardine (2000) reminds us, allow a return to the "essential generativity of human life in which there is always something left to say" (p.120). When social studies content is presented as truth and students are presented with historical certainty, something is lost in terms of citizenship. There is simply nothing left to say. If this is just how it is, if the world is black and white, then where is the impetus to take action or ask questions? Where is the impetus to improve the conditions of people living in the world? Where is the impetus to work for social justice? On the other hand, accepting that there are many shades of grey in social studies content and exploring these with students may help them to do the same in the worlds they encounter beyond school. Yet, for teachers, and for students, shades of grey may be problematic since they do not seem conducive to definitive answers and easy assessment.

Greg: *Teachers kind of stick [to the textbook] as something solid and if you question too much as a teacher, as an instructor, you open yourself up to well, why do we have to accept any of this?*

Students don't like question marks. You do get the odd student who will be probing and asking questions off the wall, and sometimes you wish they'd just butt out so you can continue on. And it's good in that sense but most students can't follow that fact that, or refuse to, maybe can't is the wrong word, but refuse to follow the fact that there's not always a right answer. If there's no right answer then how can you mark me wrong?

And there is, I don't know if I'd want to go so far as to call it laziness, although sometimes I think probably that's the best term for it, on students' as well as teachers' parts in that we'll just go with [the content of the textbook] because we can test it, it's the curriculum, an approved resource. Yeah there may be some inconsistencies but that gets messy and we don't want to go there.

Uncertainty does not work well in schools that are shaped by cultures of exams. Students learn early on that some answers are right and some answers are wrong, that the world works well when it is defined in black and white terms. Eliminating uncertainty erases confusion, doubt and fear. Take for example George Bush's comments to the world following 9/11, "you're either with us or you're against us." There is little room in such a statement for ambiguity or shades of grey. Yet the reality of the day was quite different. Not joining "the coalition of the willing" suggested to Americans that Canada was against the United States based on Bush's statement, but the Canadian Government has continued political relations and economic trade with the U.S. So there

is the grey area, somewhere in the middle of black and white, one extreme or the other. Greg uses the term "lazy" for teachers and students who approach social studies in an uncritical manner. I am not sure I would use the word lazy to describe these students and teachers. Rather, engaging in critique requires stepping into spaces of risk for teachers who feel vulnerable in relation to their own knowledge and in relation to standardized tests. Engaging in critique can be messy business for all involved. Thus, teachers may avoid the tension that comes with critique choosing instead to approach social studies as black and white, right answers and wrong answers, pass or fail, with little left to say at the end of it all.

But the world outside of school does not operate in this way, even when we try to convince ourselves otherwise. The implications for citizenship are significant. If students have learned to see the world in black and white then it is possible the choices they make will reflect this mindset. For example, I have heard university students say that making ethical consumer choices is fruitless because of the power of multinational corporations. While I do not dispute that multinational corporations are powerful entities, I do dispute approaching this topic in such a simplistic way. We are not powerless to act, but pretending that we are divests of us responsibility. Black and white can be much easier than shades of grey. This is how the world is and I am unable to change it, so I accept it and live in it as it is. Here is the path of least resistance once again. In many respects, as Greg and I came to understand through our conversations, this kind of complacent citizenship is fostered in uncritical social studies classrooms where uncertainty and ambiguity appear to have no place.

Citizenship is playing the game

Closely related to avoiding ambiguity and uncertainty is the understanding that students learn to play a particular game in social studies, one that may require them to shut down their own need to question curriculum content and sidestep grey areas in classroom conversations. Thus, **citizenship is playing the game**.

Greg: *The students are going "hey, social studies we think about citizenship in this way, because that's what's going to be on the test." In literature class now I think of it as a theme I don't think of it as any concrete system. It's a theme in a story. That's what's on the test and nary the twain shall meet.*

Jennifer: *So the kids are learning to play a particular game that isn't necessarily conducive to the building of relationships or making connections?*

Greg: *No, what it does make them into is good game players and I guess we look at citizenship as being defined by particular points within a nation state. Well, they're not too far off. I mean if they pick up on those skills they'll be able to fit in wherever they go. Back to the when in Rome...*

Jennifer: *Yeah. So citizenship is about fitting into an existing system or structure then?*

Greg: *It is. And being part of a homogenous whole, not standing alone.*

From Greg's perspective the way that students may take up the concept of citizenship and construct themselves as citizens in social studies classes depends upon what they perceive as the game of social studies. If winning the game means passing the exam and the course, then students do what they think they have to do in order to play the game. And if winning the game means fitting into an existing system or structure, then students may not want to engage in behaviours that put this in jeopardy. I can certainly relate to playing the game as a student, not wanting to question the teacher for fear of drawing negative attention to myself. For some students, there does come a time when they need to decide what is most important, playing the game, or subverting it. Based on his own experiences, Greg felt that most students did the former rather than the latter, but that there were some students who railed against playing the game for any number of reasons. Often, for high school students, the bottom line is passing a course, so they figure out what they must do to pass.

While sitting in the school office, waiting for one of my research participants to meet with me, I overheard two recent graduates of the school discussing their experiences in grade twelve. They both vehemently stated that they were adept at "playing the game" and this astuteness allowed them to succeed on all of their diploma exams. They both seemed proud of themselves, and why should they not? If they were able to "figure out" school, then likely they will be able to "figure out" life after school. As I listened to these two individuals talk, I found myself thinking back to my own experiences in school, and indeed "playing the game". I learned early on what I needed to do to get good grades, when to speak up and when to be silent, and ultimately how to adapt my own sense of citizenship accordingly. Certainly there were times when I allowed my passions to interrupt my game playing, but mostly I focussed on moving forward to reach the finish.

Both the comments of the students and Greg's insights suggest that the way we construct our own sense of citizenship is partly a function of the structure and organization of schooling. Based on this understanding, I am left to wonder about the degree to which students are constructing their own sense of citizenship and the degree to which it is being subtly constructed for them in schools and in social studies.

Lois

Questions of Citizenship

Sitting down with Lois for the first time presented an opportunity to reflect back on my first year as a social studies teacher in the same school that Lois taught in. I remembered how nervous and overwhelmed I was that first week of school and how Lois took the time to talk with me, how she reassured me that the rewards of teaching were worth the moments of anxiety. She made an effort to connect with and care about me as a beginning teacher struggling through the first year of teaching. I also remember being somewhat intimidated by Lois, a more experienced teacher who appeared confident and in control. Yet at the outset of our initial meeting Lois shared with me that she was nervous about participating in the research project, worried that she would not know how to respond to my questions or offer any meaningful insight. I appreciated Lois' honesty and her anxiety, just as she had appreciated mine so many years ago. It made me realize how easy it is to wear a particular face on the outside, masking the feelings of uncertainty on the inside. In so many ways teaching can be an isolating task, more so when we attempt to subvert feelings of self-doubt or insecurity.

Lois and I agreed that we would attempt to approach our conversations in an open and straightforward manner, honouring our own uncertainties as they arose in relation to the complexities of the questions we explored. In this way, Lois felt that she could contribute to my research and to her own understandings of teaching social studies in a more genuine and evocative way.

Citizenship is a feeling of responsibility

Jennifer: *From your perspective as a social studies teacher, what is it about the subject that is important for students to go away with when they leave social studies classrooms?*

Lois: *Especially with this curriculum, the social curriculum in Alberta I think not only the idea of not only the rights that they enjoy, and privileges that they enjoy in the system that we live in, but some sense of responsibility, for participating in some way, for contributing in some way, to the system. And if not this system then maybe recognizing a place that they could contribute elsewhere. You know, I think social 20 especially often gets me thinking more so along that sort of global perspective.*

Jennifer: *With the topic B part?*

Lois: *Yeah. And the idea maybe of citizenship beyond like the Canadian. We talk much more about the idea of world citizenship then we used to.*

Jennifer: *Yeah. For sure and the idea of breaking down the borders, or those artificial boundaries that are created by a nation-state.*

Lois: *Yeah.*

Jennifer: *So what do you think a student has to go away with to be "responsible" and I'm saying that because that's the stated goal in the social studies curriculum. What does a student have to know or have to do to be a responsible citizen?*

Lois: *Well I think they have to know enough of what the system is to understand where they may have a role. Or how they might, um, exercise their influence or how they're going to get inside the system if that's how their going to influence it, so I think they have to have enough sort of nuts and bolts understanding of the system to get where the power is and get where the decisions are made if that's the route they're going to take. I think there has to be some pretty solid, you know, structure of government, and decision-making processes and things like that so they have that nuts and bolts. But then it has to be more than that and I don't know how that gets there, it's more about feeling that responsibility. I don't know, I start to sound older and older nowadays. I get very discouraged by how people are very dismissive of um, other problems you know. That's not happening here so that's not my problem. Well, you know what? It is. Because it is going to have effect, so responsibility has to be something about a willingness to see themselves if not influencing things at least as being effected by things. But it should matter to them.*

In our discussion of responsible citizenship, Lois offered that individuals must feel responsibility if they are going to actively engage in the world. Without a feeling of responsibility, an understanding that as citizens we are all connected, the implication is that students will engage in the world egocentrically. Thus, **citizenship is a feeling of responsibility**. Implicit in Lois' understanding of responsible citizenship is an emotive ethic of care. Students will "feel" responsible insofar as they are able to care about the

situation of others, and understand and embrace the inherent connection of humanity. Osborne (1999) identifies the importance of such connection in the development of democratic citizenship, suggesting "without this sense of connectedness, citizenship is bound to be incomplete, and less humane and balanced than it must be if it is to be truly democratic" (p. 35). What Osborne fails to address in his discussion however, is that the ability to care for others is integral to a sense of connectedness. Thus, responsible citizenship is predicated upon the ability to feel which in turn evokes a deep sense of caring for others, lending itself to the connectivity that Wayne identified in our conversations and that Osborne speaks of. This is a vastly different and much more embodied understanding of "responsible citizenship" than that advanced by a rights and duties discourse of responsible citizenship or the discourse of democratic citizenship permeating the field of social studies in Canada.

Citizenship is tuning in or tuning out

In each of our three conversations, Lois reiterated the centrality of feeling or emotion to her understanding of citizenship but worried that students tuned out when they perceived content as distant or removed from their own lives, or when they become overwhelmed by a sense of helplessness. In this respect then, **citizenship is tuning in or tuning out.**

Lois: *I'm surprised how they can turn off. It's all those empty feelings when it comes to international things.*

The challenge for teachers, Lois believed, centres on cultivating compassion especially when students feel disconnected from curriculum content. Empty feelings are those devoid of emotion, thus without meaning and are fostered by a curriculum that students perceive as meaningless. Teachers must also acknowledge the spaces from which students encounter curriculum even when that means creating discomfort. Challenging malaise or the desire to turn off by encouraging students to feel something has implications for how they live outside of school. Lois suggested that students need to see there are ways they can productively engage in changing the world through something as simple as changing their own behaviour. However, behaviour likely will not change if students do not 'feel' a need to do so, continue to see themselves as disconnected from others, and fail to recognize the impact of their behaviour on others and on the world.

Closely related to the importance of feeling and emotion in our conversations was an understanding that students will not be interested in perspectives and experiences outside of their own immediate and local contexts unless they are able to connect with them through curricular content. Lois felt that much responsibility rests with teachers in that they must create spaces within the curriculum to do just that. When students become interested in and engaged with the content that they are learning, they are more likely to pay attention, to see relevance and immediacy, to "tune in" if you will, and ultimately, to feel. And not just in a classroom context, but in a real world situation. Teachers must challenge themselves to recognize that the heterogeneity of the students in their classrooms is not necessarily reflected in the curriculum content. In order to engage students whose lives and experiences seem outside of social studies curriculum, Lois suggested that teachers accept differences as productive spaces of possibility. Like Denis, Wayne, and Greg, Lois understood citizenship to require awareness on the part of students but also believed that awareness on its own is simply not enough. Students can be aware of something, but not understand it in relation to their own lives. They can have awareness but remain disconnected and unengaged. Awareness without meaning becomes meaning-less. Without understanding and feeling, there is a potential for citizenship in social studies to become passive, empty and insipid.

Citizenship is passive in social studies

As we began our third conversation, Lois indicted that she believed the social studies curriculum lent itself to the construction of passive citizenship, that often, **citizenship is passive in social studies**. For Lois, passive citizenship was linked to a lack of understanding manifest through the content and structure of social studies. We discussed the difference between the structure of the curriculum versus the content and agreed that the content does offer some possibilities to actively engage students by providing them with an understanding of Western society and the forces that shape it. From Lois' perspective, even a rudimentary understanding of the political system has the potential to empower students even "a little bit".

Lois: *I think in terms of you know, actually making them more active citizens, just even that basic knowledge and the idea of when elections happen and why they happen and what choices you have to make and things like that. They come out of that a little empowered. They do feel like it is knowable. That it is understandable. It's not this indecipherable mess of stuff that they can't make head nor tail of. All they have to figure out is*

their constituency and the candidates in their constituency. And that seems to be something that they can latch on to. So I think there is real content there and maybe also in the dictatorship units you know, the lack of democratic structure maybe makes them indirectly aware of the assumptions that they work on in terms of the rights they have and the freedoms they have in the system.

Despite this, Lois worried that through her delivery of information and the way she organized her classes, she was complicit in the creation of passive citizens.

Lois: *The conclusion that is rolling around in my head is if I can't think of anything in the content that is necessarily trying to make them passive, if it is simply the structure of how it's being delivered, that is the passive message, then who's giving them the structure and that's me!*

Lois's assertion that she was to blame, at least in part, for nurturing passive citizenship is illustrative of her own sense of responsibility to her students and her teaching. Before we began our conversations, Lois imagined that her relationship with her students created spaces for empowerment, and in many respects it did. However, she also chose to structure her classes in a way that she believed would cultivate student success on the final exam. She felt that students should be held to certain standards and that the diploma exam offered such standards, but she also began to struggle with how her teaching was limited by the exam.

Lois: *It's not that I think social 30 is necessarily a bad test – I think it's a good test of the curriculum. And it's a good test for testing test-taking skills. It's really rigorous in terms of vocabulary, convoluted sentences and that sort of thing. But again, is it testing the goals of the curriculum? When do I have time to do oral presentations? Or oral exams, or field trips or anything like that? I just don't feel like I have, I can't justify that time even though I know that's what I should be doing. Right, I know that's what social studies should be.*

Despite her belief that students need to "tune in" if they are to be active and engaged citizens, Lois found herself embodying a contradiction between knowing what needs to be done in the classroom to achieve this and actually doing it. The choices she made in her classroom were very much influenced by the way in which she negotiated the ever-present realities of the diploma exam.

In writing about the contexts of citizenship education, Sears & Perry (2000) note that high stakes exams impact citizenship and often drive classroom activity. These

observations resonate in Lois's classroom as she sacrificed her own sense of what socials studies should be in favour of preparing students for the specific activity of taking and passing an exit exam.

Lois: *I can get their attention at the beginning of a class by saying I'm going to give you two marks on the diploma exam today. Two questions, I know this material will have two questions, and I've got their attention.*

Jennifer: *Have we created a culture in which students are always thinking to that exam?*

Lois: *Yeah and maybe that's back to you know, your passive citizens. They're not interested in anything beyond what is the bare requirement of getting them past this exam. They don't want to talk about current events. The twenties we can talk like crazy, the 30s beyond a couple of students who have taken the time after class just to come and talk, they don't want to "waste" class time.*

Getting students' attention by providing them with potential diploma exam questions suggests that citizenship, for the students and for Lois, is constructed at least in part, in relation to this exam. The question that Lois and I were left to contemplate as our conversation concluded was the extent to which her own identity as a teacher was compromised more or less by the choices she made in relation to the exam.

Citizenship is service to others

Despite the concerns that were raised about the potentiality for passive citizenship in the structure of social studies, Lois believed that there was still a possibility to work with students to realize a more meaningful form of citizenship. Related to her earlier assertion that students need to feel responsibility, Lois believed that **citizenship is service to others**, implicitly moving it beyond a discourse of individualism embedded in the ethos of liberal democratic education.

Lois: *I think [citizenship has] got to mean a whole lot of other things in terms of service to the community and maybe that's not necessarily political. You know, like you can serve the community without serving a political party and I don't think citizenship is necessarily, specifically, um being politically active that way. I think it is finding some way in your community to serve your community. And politicians are one aspect of that but goodness, a lot of stuff gets done not because of politicians. I really think that idea of being a good citizen is being part of your community and however you're defining that small or large community, doing something meaningful for other people is citizenship.*

Lois' comments are interesting on a number of levels. First, she is the first of my research participants to openly articulate the assumption that acts of citizenship are primarily political in nature. While Denis came to understand citizenship as constructed in both public and private spaces, he did not articulate an understanding that historically citizenship was conceived as political acts in public spaces. Lois recognized that while citizenship is often expressed in political ways, there are other spaces in which it can be manifest. While she did not specifically locate citizenship within the home, she did locate it within the community, of which the family is a part. Her attempt to blur the boundaries of public and private spaces suggest that Lois understood citizenship as not purely political and by attempting to move it beyond solely political spaces she was endeavouring to open up new possibilities for expressions of citizenship.

Second, this understanding suggests that citizenship is as much about practice as it is about status (Lister, 1997). The idea that citizenship is "doing something meaningful for others" recognizes action and agency insofar as citizenship requires action and implies that we are agents of the world, capable of engaging in meaningful behaviour that has positive implications for those around us and for the construction of our own identities. Thus, citizenship is kept open through the possibilities of service to others in very real, very tangible ways. However, Lois also suggested that service to others must begin with changing our own behaviours and ways of thinking if such service is to be meaningful.

Citizenship is dialogic

Finally, throughout our conversations Lois consistently expressed an embodied way of thinking about citizenship in which feelings, connections, and actions create possibilities for being in the world rather than simply of the world. In this respect, embodied citizenship is not separate from the individual; it is not an act with a measurable outcome, which upon completion suggests we have done our duty. Lois' concept of the "good citizen" is a more holistic view of citizenship that does not ignore identity and agency and does not situate itself only public spaces.

The understanding that **citizenship is dialogic** became apparent as Lois and I grappled with the complexities of teaching social studies. For Lois, dialogic citizenship emerged in the interplay between conflicting ideas, disparate ways of seeing the world and the multiple understandings that students bring to class. Lois was aware that her students

were not just diverse in appearance but also in approach. They often expressed differing ideas and orientations to the world, which lent to interesting and enlightening, if not occasionally heated conversations. I asked her how she supported these differences in her teaching and she indicated that she attempted to move students "from confrontation to discussion", modelling this behaviour herself whenever she could. What seemed important to Lois was that students learn the value of dialogue, of not only listening to others but hearing what they have to say before they make unfair or hasty judgements about others. She saw this as necessary to living in the world and embracing the inherent connections and relationships of people. In many respects, understanding citizenship as dialogic stems naturally from thinking about citizenship in more embodied and integrative ways.

Carol

Questions of Citizenship

At the onset of our conversations, Carol spoke about her experiences as a student in high school social studies classes and in her social studies curriculum and instruction class at the university. Without exception, she remembered no moments that stood out as empowering or even vaguely interesting in high school.

Carol: *The instruction that I had in high school was very old school. When I think back to was there anything outstanding? Because kids tend to remember certain types of things you do in class right. Really interesting things. They'll remember debates where they got dressed up or something out of the ordinary rather than just sitting in their desks doing bookwork. I never had that in any of my years in social that I can recall.*

In her university class, Carol remembered only that the instructor encouraged students to create a fun learning environment, without really understanding its complexities or diversity. Despite this, in her own social studies classroom, Carol was able to recognize the potential for really engaging students in their learning. She saw social studies as a conduit to broader societal issues that students would at some point encounter and was critical of transmissive approaches to teaching in which the textbook become the de facto curriculum. As we explored questions of citizenship, it became clear that Carol regarded social studies as a vehicle for active citizenship in a way she never experienced as a student.

Citizenship is *an understanding of the world*

For Carol, active citizenship entailed more than simply voting or engaging in obvious political activity. Rather, she spoke about **citizenship as an understanding of the world**. Carol described active citizenship in terms of possible future choices that her students would make when they were finished school, not necessarily immediate choices with measurable outcomes. Understanding was a crucial aspect of future actions and extended beyond simply awareness of issues or events.

Carol: *At some point as an adult maybe [students will] make some right decisions. That's just one example where I feel the whole notion of responsible citizenship is more than just going out there and voting. I mean that's a small part of it but in terms of all the other things we could be doing to contribute to an understanding of our society, it's always trying to as much as possible have people understand the issues. And it's hard work, and this year in particular, because I've been focussing on my own research I've just realized how difficult the job of a social studies teacher is if you truly believe in understanding issues and how important they are.*

Carol's assertion that understanding was "hard work" suggests that teachers need to be committed to moving students from awareness to understanding, even if it requires a greater degree of thought and knowledge on the part of the teacher, even if it is "hard work". Thus, "responsible" citizenship is not limited to the choices and actions of students. Teachers too are invested with responsibility for fostering understanding. Once students have an understanding of issues, teachers need to work with students to think critically about these issues and recognize their own connections to them. I asked Carol if she focussed mainly on contemporary issues with students and she indicated that she approached the social studies curriculum generally as a series of both historical and contemporary issues rather than as discrete pieces of information married to certain themes. She articulated a need to approach active citizenship holistically as a way of being, integrated into every aspect of social studies curriculum. She worried that more often than not it was taken up in one or two units of study where students learned in a formulaic manner how to "become active citizens."

Carol: *We're all kind of coming to [the unit on government] in Social 10, and so how does [citizenship] fit and the whole question is how do you make it so it is more of an active thing? And I don't think you can do it in that chunk in the sense that we're on this unit now, and therefore we're going to teach you, in this unit, how you become an active citizen. I mean it goes*

through getting involved in lobby groups, writing letters to you MLA. And it deals with that in this sort of democratic way of things you can do to become a more active citizen in democracy, but it doesn't really deal with citizenship in the sense of within the greater community. What are other things you can do beyond that, an awareness? So I think those things are handled, hopefully, well for myself, but I'm sure with most social teachers, throughout the year in the curriculum.

In many social studies classrooms, a unit on government becomes an obvious space to locate active citizenship, thus meeting the goals set forth in the Program of Studies. Yet Carol was concerned that limiting citizenship to purely political acts was doing a disservice to students who might never choose to engage the world in this way. Carol understood that active citizenship transcended political spaces and could be realized in multiple spaces in multiple ways. So citizenship seems to be about making choices in all facets of life. Through the curricular choices she makes, Carol comes to embody her own sense of what it means to engage in active citizenship. Deciding what issues "matter" and how to approach them with students becomes a manifestation of her own citizenship in the classroom.

Citizenship is playing the game

Carol also understood the inherent difficulties in the structure of social studies for teachers committed to fostering active citizenship. I asked her what she believed students were learning about citizenship based on the content and structure of the curriculum, and she indicated that students were learning to "play the game"; that **citizenship is playing the game.**

Like Greg, Carol worried that both teachers and students were playing a game in social studies, one designed ultimately for success on the final exam. The exam measures success in terms of students' summative achievement and teachers' standards of excellence and both students and teachers are hyper aware of the "bottom line".

Carol: *Because I don't teach 30, I don't live immediately in that reality but in the sense that there is a trickle down effect I really struggled this year, I was telling you earlier that I had a lot of weaker social 10 classes this year. Do I keep these kids in my class and work with them the best that I can until June and hope for the best. They either take the 20 or the 23 route, or unload them now, I'm going to use that word "unload them now" into a 13 class where they may have more success, and get them out of my hair? Because they're struggling in my class and bringing down the class*

> *average and in terms of me not wanting to water down the curriculum. At a 10 level there are expectations in terms of types of writing assignments you should be able to accomplish, we're not doing crossword puzzles, we're not doing…you know this type of black and white in terms of what happens in a 10 class or what happens in a 13 class. Having not taught 13 I also make some assumptions as to what's happening there. And a lot of pressure that's been put on myself by myself and other teachers – saying do you want these kids in your 20 class next year? And I really struggled with that for months and months and months, in terms of my class average is extremely low, so do I maintain what I feel is an appropriate standard having taught the course for ten years? Do I make some adjustments and maybe take it down a couple of notches to be able to get them and then possibly opening them by the end of the year to a point? Or do I hold firm, knowing that I'm getting pressure and that the 20 teachers are saying to all the ten teachers you make sure you do a good job of weeding, we don't want kids who are slipping through to 20 next year because those kids inevitably will at some point trickle through into 30 or will not pass. So you know, the bottom line is, these guys, we don't want these guys to be in our 30 class and there are teachers right now who are struggling with that saying I've got kids in my 30 class who are not going to cut it. And there they sit.*

The implication seems to be that students are good citizens in so far as they are able to succeed on standardized tests. Students who are perceived as weaker, as potentially failing the exam, are marginalized by teachers who seek to "unload" them in lower level classes. In Carol's school, the culture of standardized exams was reinforced through choices teachers made in an effort to play the results game. The implicit message to students in this school is that success is a measure of citizenship in a very real way. There are consequences for students who might not succeed on a final exam, just as there are for teachers with lower exam results.

An interesting contradiction emerged as our conversation progressed. Carol suggested that in small discussions with teachers at her school she learned that they did not want to play the results game. That in fact, this was an administrative game that teachers found themselves reluctantly caught up in. While I am not disagreeing with this assertion, I find it interesting for it is often easier to divest ourselves of responsibility by blaming others, as these teachers did, but continue to engage in the behaviour even when it is identified as problematic. Thus there is an inherent tension in "playing the game". On the one hand teachers are reluctant participants, but on the other hand they are participants so the game is perpetuated. If, as Carol suggested earlier, a foundation for active citizenship is the ability to make choices, then it would seem that these

teachers were actively engaged as they made decisions about "unloading students", but at what cost? Arguably playing the game is a choice that teachers make, and their lack of resistance to it does not imply that they are passive participants (Butin, 2001). But is playing the game necessarily in the best interests of students? How do these choices made by teachers attempt to position students as citizens within schools?

Closely linked to teachers playing the game, was Carol's sense that students too played the game, doing what they had to do to get through the course and pass the final exam. Carol commented that "students were quite savvy" in figuring out the game of social studies. Whether skipping pages in textbooks perceived as unimportant or beyond the scope of the exam, not questioning content, or pretending to agree with the perceived position of the teacher on a particular issue, students do what they "have to too get by". This approach to social studies troubled Carol but did not surprise her. Rather, she saw it as a natural response to a system that positions students and teachers always in relation to an end point. Thus, it is product more than process that comes to matter in social studies.

Citizenship is staying safe

In our second conversation, Carol and I explored how for social studies teachers **citizenship is staying safe**. The desire to stay safe was apparent in teachers' willingness to play the results game and not jeopardize their own standing in relation to other teachers. If their students did well with better than average results, teachers were safe from possible sanction. If however, their students did poorly, teachers risked their standing in the eyes of administration, and possibly even risked the loss of higher-level classes. Like Denis, Carol acknowledged that teachers lived with the constant pressure of student performance and one way of alleviating this pressure was to stay safe by teaching to the exam.

Another way of staying safe in social studies, according to Carol, was to avoid controversial topics and the potential they presented for student resistance. Carol spoke about an experience she had while teaching a unit on Aboriginal culture to her grade ten social studies class in which many of her students expressed strong opinions about Aboriginal land claims. She conceded that it would have been easier for her to avoid this issue altogether, but felt that "staying safe" would have denied students the

opportunity to engage with culturally important material. However, she did acknowledge that many of her colleagues avoided student resistance by "sanitizing" content. That is, a unit on Aboriginal culture, rather than exploring historical issues, might explore historical traditions without identifying any relation to contemporary concerns. If teachers make pedagogical choices based on staying safe, the implicit message to students is that controversy and conflict are 'things' to be avoided. Again, the implications for citizenship are significant both in social studies classrooms and beyond.

Reflecting on Meanings

What these conversations, questions and understandings reveal to a large extent is how citizenship is constructed as ideal and as real in the teaching and learning of social studies. All five participants were able to express visions of citizenship beyond the prescribed curriculum. For them, the possibilities of citizenship necessitated moving beyond the discourse of responsibility, toward the ideal of engagement through awareness and understanding. There was a strong sense of citizenship transcending merely voting and obeying the laws of the land. At the same time however, all five participants acknowledged the difficulties of realizing these visions given the constraints of the curriculum.

Both Lois and Carol spoke of the need to cultivate with students an understanding of the worlds in which they live. The language these two women chose to use in discussions of citizenship is unique as they spoke of understanding rather than awareness as an integral element of educating for citizenship. For them, awareness fell short. Understanding, however, involved an opening up of awareness to get at the essence of something, the meaningfulness of an issue or event. Thus, citizenship as an ideal involves a deep understanding of the world, our place in it, not limited to our relation to the nation in which we live, but informed by our relationship to others, much like Anna Ochoa-Becker's (2002) sense that broader conceptions of citizenship must "allow citizenship to permeate all our relationships" rather than being confined to the connection between individual and state (p. 72). However, citizenship as real, that is as it exists in curriculum, through the process of assessment, and in the response of students and teacher to an exam culture, fails to account for the multi-layered, multi-relational, and multi-vocal nature of citizenship. The structure of social studies curriculum tends to keep citizenship uni-dimensional, passive, and static. It is no wonder

then that the real of citizenship collides with the ideal of citizenship in the lives of Denis, Wayne, Greg, Lois and Carol and that they are left with tensions and the messiness of teaching social studies.

Chapter 6:
Questions of Culture

Throughout the conversations, questions of culture frequently emerged in relation to understandings of citizenship. Very often, questions of culture and citizenship were woven together in the conversations. It is only for the purposes of writing this section that I have formally separated the two, although citizenship remains salient in the understandings of culture that emerged. Without exception, each participant was troubled by the quieting of culture in the spaces of curriculum, and in the spaces of the classroom. In terms of social studies curriculum, there was a prevailing concern that the curriculum did not mirror democratic ideals since there was no sustained focus on "cultural identity as central to the meaning of democracy" (Ghosh & Abdi, 2004, p. 2). For each of the five participants this became a perplexing difficulty or aporia (Smits, 1997) since conversations about culture and education have abounded in recent years, particularly in light of the official government policy on multiculturalism (McCarthy, 1998; Obidah & Teel, 2001). What follows is an exploration of questions of culture in social studies from the perspectives of Denis, Wayne, Greg, Lois and Carol as they attempted to live with realities of diverse classrooms not necessarily reflected in official curriculum documents.

Denis

Questions of Culture

In our first encounter, I asked Denis to talk about his perceptions of culture in the social studies curriculum as we explored the importance of teaching social studies in schools. I expected that Denis would approach the topic of culture very much from the perspective of a Francophone. Indeed, this initially appeared to be the case as Denis indicated that he felt issues of culture and diversity were inadequately addressed in curricular content. Because he taught in a Francophone school, Denis believed that the development of a Francophone identity was important for students in his social studies classes, but that this goal was not necessarily supported through the content of the curriculum. He also suggested that in the process of curriculum development undertaken by Alberta Learning, Franco-Albertans had a particular agenda to which identity was central.

Denis: *We have that aspect of trying to develop an identity or sense of belonging, which is not accepted very well in social studies... Clearly as Francophones yes we had our own agenda. And I think we were trying to say that we will come out with the same general outcomes and we will come out with the same specific outcomes as the dominant group – I like that – or as a native group. But as Francophones we wanted a curriculum or the contents of the curriculum we would have the same outcomes but perhaps we would not take the same route to get to the same specific outcomes. Perhaps I'll spend time talking about Quebec a little more. And perhaps I do spend time talking about Acadians somewhere. And not just history, but ... Or rights, the importance of the Charter.*

Worth noting in this discussion, and what I was most surprised by, is Denis' assertion that social studies curriculum should promote the same outcomes, general and specific, for all students regardless of their cultural identities. We might choose to arrive at these outcomes in different ways, but we will arrive nonetheless at the same place. Denis offered that the construction of a Canadian identity, the sense of being Canadian, should be supported by social studies curriculum.

Denis: *Now the discussion came at one point as to what kind of citizens do we want to produce and the end result if we could come with that and clearly it had to be a Canadian citizen, and not one where you develop more the Native identity or you develop more the Francophone identity – it had to be Canadian. My students are very Canadian, I'm not sure even Quebekers, there's some that are very strong federalists, very proud Canadians, but definitely the Franco-Albertans, they are very Franco, but they are very Canadian. They've got that identity of a Canadian.*

The goals of responsible citizenship silence culture and diversity

These comments contradict Denis' earlier assertion that social studies content needs to allow for the development of a Francophone identity. Students who belong to other cultural groups may identify with those groups on some level, but ultimately must come to identify with being Canadian, whatever that might mean. There is an implicit message of conformity in which cultural identity is eclipsed by a unified national identity. Further, discussions of culture were not separated from the concept of citizenship. Denis' sense of social studies as a vehicle for the production of Canadian citizens suggests that understandings of culture and understandings of citizenship are integrally connected. Through our conversations, we came to understand **the goals of responsible citizenship quiet and even silence culture and diversity** especially when uniform knowledge objectives are mandated for all students regardless of cultural differences.

What I found interesting in this discussion however, was Denis' use of the word "produce" to describe the cultivation of citizenship in social studies. Production brings to mind an assembly and students become the uniform product at the end of the line. Slight differences are often thought of as flaws to be corrected and in the case of students, operate as disadvantages.

Given Denis' sense that all students must reach the same outcomes regardless of individual differences, production is perhaps the most apt way to discuss the goals of citizenship. Again, a contradiction lurks behind these comments as earlier Denis indicated that citizens are not created exclusively in classrooms or schools. Denis' contradictory thinking is partly a reflection of the messiness of social studies. On the one hand he recognized that the curriculum falls short in its attempts to take up issues of culture and diversity. On the other, Denis was caught up in a dominant curricular discourse that quiets culture and diversity in the name of responsible citizenship.

The diploma exam ignores cultural diversity

Going back through the transcripts I came to understand that Denis' need for a unified body of knowledge was not because he did not believe in the importance of culture and diversity in social studies content, nor because he believed that culture should be invisible. Rather, as before, the contradictions that Denis embodied are linked in part, to the diploma exam.

Denis: *If everyone wants to come out at the end with a grade 12 exam, a grade 9 exam, a grade 3, they'll be the identical exams therefore you would hope that you develop the same knowledge, the same ability and the same attitudes.*

The same knowledge, the same ability, the same attitudes. Look out over the sea of bodies in any classroom however, and you will see an abundance of difference, of diversity. But this difference disappears in the gaze of the exam rendering culture static and neutral. Thus, **the diploma exam ignores cultural diversity** in social studies classrooms. Yet, Denis understood that culture should not be separated from social studies and that discussions of identity necessarily involve discussions of culture. However, he also understood that culture as it is experienced and lived by the students in his class is left irrelevant by a diploma exam that treats all students the same, homogenizes them if you will, for the sake of rigour and accountability. Denis'

comments about culture and identity suggest a tension implicit in living between prescribed and negotiated experiences. The curriculum prescribes the same knowledge and objectives for students, culminating in the diploma exam, but also allows for the negotiation of identity, in this case Francophone. What troubles me though is how the diploma exam seems to usurp these possibilities, homogenizing students and influencing the choices teachers make.

Wayne

Questions of Culture

The concept of awareness transcended our discussions of citizenship, finding its way into questions of culture and gender. In each of our conversations, Wayne indicated that from his perspective, the current social studies curriculum in Alberta perpetuated a particular narrative from the perspective of a dominant cultural group.

Wayne: *I think the first challenge is to overcome the current program of studies as it is from one perspective. If we take a pretty close read of it we can see it's Eurocentric, pretty Eurocentric, and there is one narrative that runs throughout the program of studies. For a teacher to investigate other possibilities or other narratives I think that would require some pretty intensive research for other stories.*

Diversity lives on the edge in social studies

Wayne's insights suggest that even when teachers are aware that the curriculum reflects a dominant narrative, they will not necessarily act on their awareness or, the action they choose may be inaction. In this regard, the curriculum supports the goals of cultural assimilation through the failure to include multiple voices and perspectives in curriculum content despite an awareness of their existence. Because students often come in contact with dominant perspectives and knowledge in their social studies lessons, they may come to accept the dominant view as "truth" forgetting about the multitude of voices and perspectives interacting beyond the classroom. So **diversity lives on the edge**, in terms of the inclusion of multiple voices and perspectives in curriculum content and in terms of the awareness we have of them. They are in danger of falling over the edge, disappearing from sight, lost in a vast emptiness. Living on the edge also implies living outside of society's norms. Certainly, voices and perspectives perceived outside of the mainstream live on the edge insofar as they are "other", always in danger of being

pushed over the edge or marginalized (Ghosh & Abdi, 2004; Mahalingam & McCarthy, 2000). In our conversations, Wayne worried that the exclusion of disparate voices regardless of whether teachers are aware of them or not, shuts down possibilities for cultural awareness and citizenship in social studies.

After much reflection, I find it curious that Denis, a member of a minority cultural group, did not really question the dominant narrative of social studies, while Wayne, a member of the dominant cultural group, did question this narrative. Was it easier for Denis, speaking from a minority cultural position, to accept that there should be a so-called Canadian identity that we all strive for? In some respects accepting that we can all share an identity negates the disparities that exist between cultures, erases the concept of minority. We are all Canadians and as such are equal. Was Wayne able to step outside of such a narrative because he already enjoyed a position of privilege within it? Is it easier for those of us already occupying privileged positions vis-à-vis our membership in the dominant group to be critical of the dominant perspective? These are the questions that emerged for me as I revisited our dialogue and contemplated issues of culture in social studies.

Greg

Questions of Culture

In our first conversation, I asked Greg how he perceived the social studies curriculum was able to enhance or inhibit student identities in terms of their cultural background. His response reflects Britzman's (2003) assertion that in schools, much is left to the teacher.

Greg: *Ummm....(reflective silence) cultural identity. I think a lot of it has to do with the individual teacher and uh...(reflective silence) how they approach the material. Umm, speaking from the English perspective, there's nothing really that I can think of off hand in the curriculum itself that says anything sort of mandated that you will deal with issues of identity and gender and culture and so on. There's nothing there. Um, it's you know building respect and co-operating with others and terminology like that and so it becomes much more how does the individual teacher deal with texts. Social studies perhaps lends itself a little bit more but I think too that the curriculum is worded vaguely enough that if you didn't want to deal with those issues in a class you could quite easily get around it and not worry about it at all.*

Jennifer: *I've seen that happen.*

Greg: *Yeah. So I think that in terms of curriculum enhancing dealing with those things, I don't think it exists. I don't think the mandated curriculum from the government puts that forward. Individual teachers take it up to varying degrees.*

Culture lives as "other" in social studies

The difficulty that Greg had in responding to my question, his need to pause in silent reflection before answering, suggests that there is nothing simple about discussions of culture in social studies. Rather, culture is complex and fluid particularly in relation to student identities. That said, Greg offered insights I found interesting on a number of levels. First, his sense that culture was something to be dealt with by teachers implies that it lives outside of students in social studies classrooms and because of this, may or may not be taken up by teachers. It also implies that culture is an inconvenience or an annoyance, something to "be dealt with" just as unruly or disruptive students must be dealt with. Because of this, **culture lives as 'other' in social studies**.

Rather than approaching culture as an implicit and embodied characteristic of individuals, which requires attention in curriculum and teaching, Greg seemed to sense that it was disconnected from mandated curriculum. What are the implications of this for students from diverse cultural backgrounds in social studies classrooms? If culture is disconnected from content, if it indeed lives as 'other', are the cultural identities of students disconnected from social studies curriculum?

Second, if culture is something that is left up to individual teachers, then the inference is that it lacks curricular value; that it does not need to be salient in social studies. Even if the curriculum document is worded vaguely enough to leave culture to the discretion of the teacher, how are teachers able to negotiate it? As I suggested previously, teachers and students may understand that the knowledge contained in the curriculum is there precisely because it has value. Anything outside of explicitly stated knowledge objectives teeters on the edge of a precipice, in constant danger of falling over the edge. Because the goals of citizenship permeate social studies, the implication is that culture and citizenship are disconnected. Yet are we not defined at least in part, by our culture? And as such, do we not to some degree construct our own sense of citizenship in terms of our cultural identities?

In their discussion of identities and representations in education, Asher & Crocco (2001) recognize the centrality of culture to the formation of identity, but worry that there is a tendency in schools to essentialize culture precisely because curriculum fails to recognize "the plurality of perspectives and experiences" (p. 135). Leaving culture up to individual teachers may do more harm than good as illustrated by the following passage:

> No need to hear your voice when I can talk about you better than you can speak about yourself. No need to hear your voice. Only tell me about your pain. I want to know your story. And then I will tell it back to you in my way. Tell it back to you in such a way that it has become mine, my own. Re-writing you, I write myself anew. I am still author, authority (hooks, 1990, pp. 151-152).

The danger of leaving culture up to individual teachers, if it gets taken up at all, is that it may become "other", essentialized and exoticized, influencing the way in which students come to define themselves as citizens in relation to their own cultural locations in social studies classrooms and larger society.

Lois

Questions of Culture

Because Lois taught in such a diverse environment, culture was something she interacted with on a daily basis. She noted that having diverse classes had "really pushed" her to become aware of other perspectives. In relation to questions of culture in social studies curriculum, she shared with me an experience she had at an early curriculum consultation and how disillusioned she was by it.

Lois: *And I have never heard such a bigoted conversation in my life. I came away so disillusioned and discouraged because, as one woman said, trying to put an Aboriginal emphasis in the curriculum, what possibly of value could you teach from that culture? It was a defeated culture, what possibly would you include? She was a young elementary school teacher, and isn't that where they do some of this stuff? In the elementary curriculum? Who could think of nothing of value or worth talking about. And this older man who taught either on a reserve or in a school next to a reserve, seconded that opinion. And then somehow it seemed to be that opened up the discussion and then we got onto well, what are we giving all these French guys all this stuff? And it became alarmingly really, I saw this real entrenchment of, the only thing of value is what we're currently doing and why would we move away from that? I could just see at that table if they'd even tried to introduce some kind of gender discussion well, I think it would have gone somewhere below the Aboriginal discussion. I remember coming away thinking, those are social studies teachers!*

Staying the same is about staying safe in social studies

The resistance Lois experienced from other social studies teachers to including Aboriginal and Francophone perspectives in the curriculum suggests that for some, dominant cultural perspectives and experiences are so normalized in social studies as to be unchangeable. Both the young elementary teacher and the older man were vocally opposed to a more inclusive curriculum because they did not see it as relevant. Perhaps too, their own cultural identities were so caught up in the current curriculum that to change it would threaten their own sense of self. Thus, it is much safer to leave the curriculum alone and justify the exclusion of multiple perspectives on historical grounds so **staying the same is about staying safe**. Lois' own comment about doing "some of this stuff" is interesting because it implies that culture is not a way of being. Rather, culture (outside of the dominant culture) is reduced to the status of discrete pieces of information or "stuff" allocated to certain grade levels and certain topics rather than integrated throughout social studies. On the one hand, Lois understood the responses of her colleagues to be problematic, but on the other hand, she herself articulated a dominant reading of culture in social studies.

At the start of our third conversation, I asked Lois how she thought issues of culture fared in the current Program of Studies, and she offered the following response.

Jennifer: *This is around our discussion of Aboriginal women and what they saw they're own experiences, or didn't see their own experiences in the curriculum. And where it might work within the curriculum and where it doesn't work within the curriculum. Overall, how do you feel those issues fare?*

Lois: *I think European culture gets a lot of attention (laughs) and that's been brought to my attention repeatedly and maybe again because our classroom is so different and we've got so many non-European background people. And I end up justifying it all the time you know. These Africans, and particularly Chad, asking how come we don't do African history? Well, cause this isn't Africa. This is Canada, and our origins in terms of our political system and what we've inherited in the way of an economic system come from Western Europe. I end up doing this whole, so you're indoctrinating? Well yeah. I don't think I've ever said I wasn't. But I think that we do do that. That we do clearly make time to teach the Western culture, and because time is tight that means you won't get a lot of recognition for anything other than that.*

We are anchored by our own cultural locations

Lois' observations reflect her own position as a member of the dominant cultural group. Her response, while pragmatic on one level, suggests an inconsistency in her own approach to issues of culture. Earlier, she spoke with frustration about the inflexibility of social studies teachers toward a more culturally inclusive curriculum. However, she herself reflected some inflexibility in her response to her African students as she justified the exclusion of African history on the grounds that "this isn't Africa. This is Canada." The assumption here is that location has to dictate content. Because she teaches in a Canadian context, she does not problematize the teaching of Western culture in isolation and goes so far as to justify it in terms of time constraints. As well, using the term "these Africans" to describe a group of her students creates a dichotomy in which they become other, outside of the mainstream, just as their experiences and perspectives are outside of social studies curriculum. Initially, I was puzzled by Lois' comments for they seemed not in keeping with many of her other comments and approaches to teaching. Now, I understand that to some extent that they are indicative of how **we are anchored by our own cultural locations**. Lois read the curriculum and the responses of her "African" students to the curriculum from her own cultural context just as these students read the curriculum and Lois from their cultural locations. The challenge in social studies and beyond is to understand how we come to be anchored by culture and the implications this has for our interactions with others.

Carol

Questions of Culture

On several occasions, Carol and I found our conversations focussing on questions of culture in social studies. Culture seemed to be forefront in Carol's mind as she was completing her own masters research focussed on the teaching of Aboriginal culture in social studies. The integration of multiple perspectives in social studies content was something Carol appeared very committed to, and she repeatedly commented on its importance.

Carol: *You could in some ways say social is the easiest subject to teach if you were to accept there's a truth, there's a fundamental truth, a dominant narrative, and you come in and you present the information and I'm not going to lead you in any direction, give you any other perspective or ways of thinking on it, other than sort of what's been automatically expected of*

> *people. It's right or wrong. You give some reasons behind that and leave it at that and you don't go home and loose sleep at night. However, there's the other side of it where you do truly believe that all these issues matter as I've come to really expect these issues to matter to myself, that they should matter as much to my students. And you know, it's a never-ending thing in terms of what issues should matter.*

For Carol, embracing multiple perspectives in her own teaching mattered so much so that she was willing to "loose sleep at night" rather than denying students the opportunity to look outside of their own cultural locations to broaden understandings of the world. She rejected a fundamental truth in social studies in favour of multiple understandings and attempted to incorporate these in her teaching. However, the sense that doing this would cause her to "loose sleep" is an interesting one. It recognizes the limitations of the curriculum in terms of promoting a dominant narrative and the challenges teachers are faced with as a result. But why does resisting the curriculum cause one to "loose sleep" if only figuratively? In part, it is not just about resisting the curriculum, it is about resisting the relations of power caught up in the discourse of social studies. Rejecting a fundamental truth or dominant narrative is a risky endeavour since it deviates from entrenched content and approaches to teaching content that have shaped social studies since it's inception (Osbourne, 1997). What Carol does not state, but what I perceive as implicit in her comments is that teachers who choose a less travelled path in their own pedagogical practices risk being seen as deviant, radical, as having an agenda. Individuals tend to "loose sleep when consumed with anxiety and worry. Stepping outside of sanctioned curriculum to provide students with 'other' perspectives is one such potentially anxiety provoking endeavour.

Culture lives on the edge of understanding

Regardless of the potential for anxiety, Carol remained determined to take up issues of culture in her own teaching, to prevent **culture from living on the edge of understanding.** Because she recognized the cultural limitations of the curriculum, and because the cultural locations of her students were so varied, Carol felt that to do otherwise would on some level, be failing her students. Whether or not her students would embrace this approach or see immediate relevance, she maintained that they would carry the learning with them; that it would always be "in them". Again, Carol embraced a more embodied approach to teaching, trusting that the choices she made would have a lasting effect on students as they encountered the world beyond school.

However, her worry that students would not see the immediate relevance of multiple cultural perspectives suggests that students too are caught up in a dominant way of reading the world in which culture lives on the edge of understanding, never completely absent, but never fully present.

Reflecting on Meanings

Our discussions of culture over the course of the conversations suggest to me that while teachers may have an awareness of curricular shortcomings, they struggle with actively addressing the shortcomings. For these teachers, there seems to be recognition that culture as it is lived is a way of being, imbued with multiple realities and complexities. However, in social studies curriculum, culture seems to be a way of doing rather than of being. What I mean by this is that culture is something done to students. They are taught certain traditions of knowledge with entrenched cultural perspectives (Ghosh & Abdi, 2004) yet often exist outside of these traditions and perspectives. Through the quieting of culture in social studies curriculum students themselves are quieted, depending upon their own cultural locations and perspectives. As was the case with questions of citizenship, culture evoked tension for my five participants as they lived with their own awareness of the cultural limitations of the curriculum and the cultural realities of the classroom navigating each from a place in-between.

Chapter 7:
Questions of Gender

One of the reasons I was compelled to explore questions of gender in social studies with my five participants came from my own historical consciousness and belief that when gender is used as a category of analysis in social studies, new understandings are made possible (Griffiths, 1995; Stone, 1996 & 2000). Crocco (2001) writes "to date, the social studies field has been largely silent in its public discourse about gender" and that gender is "embodied in the daily, often difficult, lives of young people" (p. 70). I wanted to break this silence that Crocco speaks of, this quiet that has enveloped the field of social studies in recent years, by bringing questions of gender to the forefront of our conversations, integrally connecting them to questions of citizenship. Each of my participants offered insight into questions of gender in social studies, and while at times the questions evoked discomfort, they nevertheless allowed us to explore in a very meaningful way, understandings of gender within and beyond social studies.

Denis

Questions of Gender

Denis' awareness of issues of gender in social studies was self- admittedly limited to considerations of gender differences. He was very honest with me about his shortcomings in this area and through our conversations, made a concerted effort to broaden his thinking.

Denis: *I was thinking about your question about gender, am I conscious in social? In phys.ed. very and I spent time in phys.ed. there again because I participated in a study at one point, but I'm very conscious and I talk about it in phys.ed. class you know that we're there for all the same reasons, and whether there's boys or girls, it makes no difference, and everybody should have the same chances, you know and not take more chance from anybody else. But there's much more room in phys. ed. In social 30, I'm not even sure. I was thinking, is there a gender, I mean I could discuss gender issues, in social 10, in social 30 a little less. But even in my classroom I was thinking, am I conscious of gender differences? Not in social, I would be conscious with my students who are from Quebec and those who aren't, very often. They're not shy at all about saying anything, discussing. The member of a minority will very often tend to be more not as open to talk as easily. Now, I'm not sure which gender, whether it was discussing how many female members of*

parliament we had, or if laws in Canada, are there some that are discriminatory, in social 10. But in social 30 I'm not sure.

From Denis' perspective, gender issues seem to initially be about the differences between male and female students, and in a physical education context, ensuring that male and female students have the same chances to excel. In social studies however, Denis recognized that he was more aware of culture than of gender and when he began to consider gender, he did so in the context of including discussions of women in existing content, Tetrault's (1986) "add women and stir" recipe for social studies. However, the more we talked about gender the more Denis came to question it in the social studies curriculum. He wondered why so little attention was given to the political lives and experiences of women in Canada, and worried that if left up to the teacher, this information might never be conveyed to students. In our final conversation, Denis shared with me a report he had found in a magazine highlighting women's perceptions of their quality of life in countries around the world and spoke excitedly of the possibilities for learning inherent in sharing the report with students. While he did not seem to question why issues of gender remain virtually absent in social studies curriculum, Denis began to explore his own understandings of the content of social studies in relation to these issues and revisit his approaches to teaching.

Questioning gender opens up possibilities for students in social studies

Denis acknowledged that if one of the goals of social studies was indeed critical thinking, students should be given an opportunity to develop this skill through discussions of gender. **He felt that questioning gender opens up possibilities for students in social studies**. He also pointed out that in the past twelve years on the diploma exam, there had not been a single essay question explicitly taking up questions of gender.

Denis: *Because I definitely have as many girls as I have boys. It's an interesting thing. And I'm thinking of argumentative essays because again, and it's not good, I think of the exam and we did argumentative essays several times, and then we went over, and we practiced introductions. We practiced finding arguments and supporting them with facts, but very often, I don't even say very often, I don't even know if there was a gender question at one point. Or if there was an aspect or an argument given where gender could be discussed.*

Denis' thinking evolved from gender as difference between male and female students, to gender as possibility for male and female students. Discussions with students in which

questions of gender are central create spaces for dialogue and reflection that Denis had not previously considered in his own classroom and teaching.

We continued to discuss issues of gender over the course of our conversations and found ourselves, in our second conversation, talking about the role of the family in the creation of citizenship. We both were troubled that family seemed to have no place in high school curriculum despite its importance in the lives of students. Denis began to talk with me about where family might be included in the existing curriculum.

Denis: *How could you fit [family] in somewhere in grade 10 or grade 11 or...?*

Jennifer: *Well maybe it could be integrated in every grade.*

Denis: *How do I fit it in? I imagine when we talk about values and attitudes we could talk about how these come from family, but I'm not sure in social studies..*

Jennifer: *Well if social studies is the study of human relationships as many people believe it to be, where else would you put it but in social studies?*

Denis: *Well, what about in CALM[1]? That seems like a good place to put it.*

Jennifer: *But you know what happens then, is it marginalizes it because those subjects (CALM) are the marginal subjects right? They're outside of the mainstream.*

Denis: *I don't have room anywhere in French Language Arts, I don't have room in Phys. Ed. I don't have room anywhere else.*

While Denis clearly recognized the role of family in citizenship education, he had difficulty imagining how and where family might fit into existing school curriculum. His suggestion that it be included in CALM but not in social studies or language arts is telling. Discussions of family present not only opportunities for discussions of values and attitudes, but also of the social construction of gender and the political separation of public and private spaces. It presents opportunities for the exploration of unpaid work and the value placed on caring for children in contemporary western society. I am reminded here of Noddings' (1992) suggestion that rather than an emphasis on

[1] Career and life management is a required course for all high school students, usually taken in the grade eleven year.

citizenship, social studies might emphasize family membership and homemaking. However, as Denis articulated, citizenship and family are not disparate concepts and "either or" scenarios like the one Noddings advocates, do little to deepen or expand thinking about citizenship or gender.

So why then is it so difficult for Denis to imagine the inclusion of family in secondary social studies curriculum? Partly because it seems to live outside of existing knowledge objectives and partly because, as Roland-Martin (1995) reminds us schools function is to "equip students to take their places as workers and citizens in the world outside the private home" (p. 163). Denis' struggle to "fit" family into the existing social studies curriculum is not surprising given these normative goals of schooling. In social studies, normative goals are compounded by the realities and pressures of diploma exams, offering little opportunity for the inclusion of "non-traditional" topics and other ways of thinking. Once again, Denis embodied the tensions between prescribed and negotiated experience.

Wayne

Questions of Gender

Because of my familiarity with Wayne and our previous interactions, I expected that in our conversations, we would have much to say about gender in social studies. We had both attended conference sessions and graduate classes in which gender was the centre of discussion. However, despite talking at length about citizenship and culture in social studies, we had much less to say about gender. While Wayne made reference to gender in each of our conversations he did so in a cursory fashion, leaving much unsaid. It was only after I had been through our transcripts several times that I realized a void existed. Initially, I noted that gender did find its way into our conversations, that we were indeed discussing it and thinking about. However, even though the word gender may have appeared in the transcripts, it did not guarantee that it we took it up in a meaningful or sustained way. We left much out of these discussions, dancing around the issue, redirecting our attention to other topics. There are instances when we tried to engage with it, talked a little about the separation of public and private spaces, of using gender and culture as categories of analysis in social studies, but we seemed to stop short, to

shut down the topic before we really wrestled with it. The following excerpts from our conversation illustrate our inability to take gender up as a significant topic of discussion.

Jennifer: *We deconstruct things that live outside of our dominant narrative but we don't take the time to really critique what we live in and I think that throughout the curriculum we can use **gender** and culture as categories of analysis with students. You said, you can deconstruct, critique at the moment, it's allowed, it's permitted to deconstruct capitalism, that's allowed, but I think it's less allowed now then it was previously.*

Wayne: *As you well know in your research, the majority voice determines um, how **gender** is treated in textbooks or how citizenship, how we define citizenship, and we can't do that anymore. So that's where I'm coming from. Where's Alberta Learning coming from?*

Jennifer: *There's that **gendered** division of public and private built into the liberal democratic idea of rationality, individualism. Women were to focus on family, not just themselves, they couldn't so again there's that divorce of the public and private based on the tenets of liberal democracy. You've got rationality, you've got individualism, and women often didn't have the same choices as men did. And even now those choices are limited. Even though society says they're not - you know – you've come a long way baby and all of that. I think right now there's a real backlash against feminism.*

Gender is the unspeakable in social studies.

DeVault (1999) speaks about the importance of paying attention to the unsaid, "in order to produce it as a topic and make it speakable". In our conversations, **gender became the unspeakable**, even though we spoke about it. It seemed to hover just below the surface of our dialogue. In the first excerpt, I suggested that gender might be used as a category of analysis in social studies, but I failed to elaborate on what I meant. Instead, I moved the conversation toward capitalism, leaving behind gender as a category of analysis and all the possibilities for understanding that might have emerged had we pursued it more intensely as a topic of discussion. In the second excerpt, Wayne commented on the treatment of gender in textbooks, but did not elaborate on what he understood that to mean. How did he perceive the treatment of gender in textbooks and what are the implications of this for students and for citizenship? In the third excerpt there is a greater attempt to explore the gendered construction of private and public

realms, but I stopped short of exploring the implications for social studies or why there might be a backlash against feminism.

I am troubled by my own failure to more fully engage the question of gender in social studies in a research project that is attempting to explore what is questionable about social studies. But not speaking up about gender in a sustained way has allowed me to think carefully about my own location as a woman teaching social studies and the silencing I have experienced as both teacher and student. I believe that fear played a role in the way I approached the topic of gender with Wayne, with Denis, and later with Greg. Here are three men whom I respect and admire, and who agreed to give their time to this research project. Taking up gender in a superficial way was perhaps my attempt to avoid discomfort, the possibility of resistance, and even the possibility of anger.

The experiences I spoke of in Chapter 1 have clearly influenced my location as a researcher in more ways than I initially imagined going so far as to inhibit my own ability to discuss, in-depth, issues of gender in social studies and citizenship with the three male participants. My experiences coupled with my historically effected consciousness came to bear on the manner in which gender was or was not a salient part of our conversations and questioning. When I spoke about citizenship as the path of least resistance, I did so in relation to students and teachers in social studies classrooms. It applies here as well. Approaching questions of gender superficially as a topic of conversation suggests that I too chose the path of least resistance, one that initially appeared to be free from pain and discomfort. However, through the process of self-reflection and the realization that I have in some ways failed as a researcher, I am confronted with an abundance of pain and discomfort.

Feminist educator Elizabeth Adams St. Pierre (2001) writes about the feminist work of "paying attention to my lived experiences" where she views experience as produced through theoretical understanding, that theory produces people (142). Here, experience is a complex concept, not simply something that happens to us. My experiences of conversing with Wayne, of avoiding gender as a troubled construct in social studies, suggests to me that paying attention to my lived experiences extends beyond my earlier autobiographical writing. As a woman working in social studies, I have been re-

produced in part by a theory of knowledge that privileges patriarchal traditions of Western society. Even when I see myself in relation to this tradition and attempt to subvert it, I am still within it. Fear, anxiety, uncertainty, and confusion are all conditions of being a woman in this tradition. Feminist research, states Lather (1992) must concern itself with the politics of knowing and being known. One of the difficulties, or challenges if you will, is to know how gender operates as a site of tension in teaching. But more than that is knowing how the social construction of gender continues to operate even when we imagine we are beyond it. When I sat down to talk with Wayne about social studies, I had no idea that I would be inhibited by gender. I really believed as a feminist that I could engage in deep and meaningful discussions about issues of gender. What caught me by surprise was how entangled I was in my own desire to transform understanding while at the same time avoiding discomfort. According to Rousseau, the charge of women over the years is to be the sweeter companion to man when he needs to relax and be comforted (Wollstonecraft, 1992). Rousseau might have praised me for in this case, was I not being the sweeter companion to Wayne by not creating tension or discomfort through a sustained questioning of gender in our conversations? And is not sustained questioning a hermeneutic obligation to open up conversation? Tension and discomfort are necessary circumstances if knowledge and thinking are to be transformed.

When I consider the process of giving birth, excruciating pain and discomfort where integral features of an experience that has inevitably transformed my life. There is something to be learned here. Coming to understandi like giving birth, is not an easy, or comfortable, or pain free process nor is it one without reward. Holding my daughter Ayla changed the way I saw the world and I believe I am a better person for it. Breathing through pain and discomfort creates spaces for the emergence of new understandings, new ways of thinking, offering possibilities for encountering the world differently in all its complexities.

Greg

Questions of Gender

Greg and I touched on questions of gender in our first two conversations, but it was not until our final conversation that gender was addressed in any depth, and even than, as with Wayne, we seemed to stop before we had really begun. Going back through our transcripts a number of times, I have noticed the emergence of an interesting pattern. In each instance when I ask Greg explicitly to respond to questions of gender, he begins to, but then moves the conversation in other directions.

Greg: *But how do you get around the fact that uh, we can facts, sure, but there is always going to be that element of what's included and what's left out.*

Jennifer: *Right.*

Greg: *And that to me displays a bias. Well, this want's really important. Well why? Why isn't it very important? It reveals a certain bias on your part. Why is it that most early textbooks had very little to do with women? It's a bias, it's a cultural bias.*

Jennifer: *And still do?*

Greg: *And still do. Exactly. Why do they focus very little on labour history – well that's a bias. We don't want to go there.*

Gendered knowledge is a taboo topic in social studies

Rather than exploring the nature of these biases and how women are positioned in social studies curriculum as a result, or exploring why there is a reluctance to unpack curricular biases with students, the conversation shifted. Instead Greg reframed the concept of bias as opening up productive spaces insofar as we are able to recognize our own prejudices. I do not dispute his assertions, but I am concerned that Greg seemed to divest the curriculum of responsibility choosing instead to place it in the hands of individual students. Identifying our own prejudices may move us toward new understandings of issues of gender and culture but only if careful consideration is paid to how individual prejudices are often shaped by societal prejudices. We are after all thrown into a world that already exists, so are constructed by this world in our entirety.

What I have come to understand in light of my conversations with Greg and Wayne is the extent to which **gender may operate as a taboo topic in social studies** education. Evans & Avery (2000) describe taboo as:

> A Polynesian word that means a general ban on a specific object, which should not be touched…taboos may be defined as beliefs that constrain actions by making certain behaviours and discussions of certain topics forbidden or discouraged. Thus, taboo topics are those topics that social studies teachers may chose to avoid or de-emphasize because of their perceptions or beliefs regarding the sensitivity of the topic…Taboos exert control on our everyday lives, as well as our schools and determine the boundaries for what is acceptable and unacceptable (p. 295-296).

In the context of social studies, gender could be conceived of as a taboo topic insofar as discussions are often limited to including women's history within an existing body of knowledge rather than unpacking social studies as a gendered site of knowledge. My reluctance to make gender questionable in these conversations has surprised me given my own commitment to using gender as a category of analysis in social studies. Partly, this reluctance illustrates my own fears as a woman in a tradition where I live as "other". It also reveals a tension that I am struggling to articulate even as I write this section. What are the implications for my own sense of citizenship? If, as Evans & Avery suggest, taboos exert control on our everyday lives, then it is possible that my own position as a researcher questioning gender is controlled in part by gender as taboo topic. I am not suggesting that gender is never a topic of conversation or exploration because I recognize that it is and has been in genuinely meaningful ways. What I am suggesting is that in the in-between spaces of this research, gender has to varying degrees been neutralized, neutered, made speakable in superficial ways that fail to elucidate the inherent tensions that gender has the potential to evoke.

Lois

Questions of Gender

In our first conversation, Lois indicated that she believed there was bias in the curriculum and struggled with her own awareness of it. She suggested that the bias was built into the content of the curriculum as well as the style of the exam, but did not elaborate on what she meant by this until I prompted her to do so. She offered the following insights in response to my question:

Lois: *Well I think with Topic A, a lot of the politics and economics stuff is at least perceived as, and accurately perceived, as being dominated by male choices in terms of government and in terms of economic policies. I think that could be softened up a lot. I think you could talk more about you know, GNP per person. You could talk more about where the education is. You could talk more about where the spending is and where it's not. Like in day care and things like that. I think that could be made even within maybe the confines of this curriculum, you could work that stuff in. But topic B is just completely guy stuff. War after war after war, and I find a lot of the women check out. Even if they do fairly well in topic A, which I do first, they check out in topic B. It's just not, and a lot of the guys kick in, in Topic B.*

What I find interesting about Lois' comments is her sense that Topic A "could be softened up a lot" if females students are to connect with it. The use of the term softened suggests gendered assumptions about knowledge and that girls are more likely to relate to and connect with a content perceived as 'softer'. In educational terms, softer may be associated with less work or effort, less rigour if you will, the implication being that what is softer is lesser. Connecting this term with female students is problematic if read in such a way. However, I am not sure that was Lois' intent. Implicit in her statement is a sense that what is softer is also more human, whether it be an exploration of the economics of childcare or the wage levels of women in society. Thus 'softer' knowledge is not of less importance, it is just a different way of connecting students with information and seeing the relationship between abstract concepts and real people.

Gender forms and informs social studies curriculum

Regardless of the words Lois chose to voice her concerns, the message she relayed suggests imbalance. Topic B in the Alberta Program of Studies requires that students study 20th century conflict. If indeed Topic B is "guy stuff" as Lois suggested and if indeed her female students "check out" then it would seem that the gendered construction of knowledge and the gendered response to such knowledge is further normalized through this content. Thus, gender forms and informs social studies curriculum. That said, Lois' recognition that something is amiss in curricular content and her desire to find ways of bringing her female students into the conversation creates possibilities for all of her students to challenge the material they are learning.

In addition to her comments about how students relate to the content of social studies, Lois also expressed concern about what was missing from the curriculum. Specifically,

she wondered why in grade 12 social studies students were learning about ideological systems, but they were not learning about patriarchy as an ideology informing these systems. She made reference to a video she had located which explored patriarchy as an ideological system and that she had used in one of her classes the previous semester.

Lois: *I'm just thinking, have you watched, I've lost the title of it. It's a Gwyn Dyer series, it's a four part series, it's very recent and I happened on a couple, I used one in class last semester, I just happened on it. I went to the Grant MacEwan library and did this search and here's this series. And my jaw just fell open, it's such an interesting, it's development, discussing development issues, and there's a whole section, a one hour segment, there's four in total, and one hour is on the history of patriarchy [and] he goes back to biblical times you know, and the organization of society and the subjugation of women and he goes through the whole rationale that comes out of that, the legal system that comes out of having to keep this, well first of all destroy a matriarchal organization and then impose this new system and then takes it and gets into the political ramifications. That patriarchy is the roots of dictatorship as well, you know there's that connection. And he just says his own little blurb at the end and he's feeding what I presume is his grandchild probably in his own kitchen and he makes the comment that things are changing, that more young men are in fact taking on more responsibilities in their home and stuff like that. That his argument is that that has to happen in order for there to be democracy. His whole theme of this is about democracy and the development of democracy.*

Democracy is an accomplishment in social studies curriculum

When she spoke of the video, Lois was clearly excited about the possibilities it presented for moving her students toward understandings of the world that recognize its complexities, and how patriarchy operates as an overarching ideological system informing other systems. Although she did not explicitly say so, it was implicit in her description of the end of the video that democracy remains an aspiration rather than an accomplishment even though it is not taught as such in social studies. Rather, social studies with its emphasis on responsible and democratic citizenship suggests that **democracy is an accomplishment**. These insights are echoed by W.C. Parker (2001), who expresses concern that in social studies classrooms, teachers tend to approach democracy as an achievement rather than as something to continually be strived for. Democracy, according to Parker was 'achieved' with the creation of constitutions and bills of rights, although these documents do not necessarily ensure the equality and freedom of all people. Rather, democracy must be about "a way of living with others, a

way of being" (p. 109). However, Parker does not interrogate the contradictions inherent for women living within 'democratic' systems informed by patriarchy. Lois seemed to make this connection and because of this, revealed an important failing in the social studies curriculum. Where is the study of patriarchy? Why is democracy treated as an accomplishment? Together, we pursued these questions, and began to explore why feminism was nowhere to be find in the Program of Studies despite being an important ideology in itself. Lois shared with me attempts that she made to incorporate feminist perspectives in a unit on economics, and how her efforts were met with resistance from some students.

Lois: *I think we've got a lot of freedom to do a lot with this course when you close the door. And I have bumped into students who have accused me of, I think wrongly, well no, accused me rightly of having sort of a feminist agenda. But wrongly of trying to force that agenda. It was in response to that Marilyn Waring tape – you know, the "Who's Counting" thing.*

The video that Lois referred to presented students with an interrogation of the world's economic systems, which tend to marginalize women and devalue the unpaid work of women in the home. She used the video to expand the discussion of economics and to illustrate how economic systems are structured and how they position individuals within those systems, particularly women. Being met with resistance suggests that some students were uncomfortable with the lesson and expressed their discomfort by openly confronting Lois and accusing her of forcing a feminist agenda. While she recognized that she did have a feminist agenda, she took issue with being accused of forcing that agenda, suggesting teachers of social studies have a responsibility to provide multiple ways of looking at material. In other lessons Lois had taken similar approaches to topics of study through different cultural lenses, but had not been met with the same vocal and even hostile resistance. This experience created tension, even pain, for Lois as she struggled with being a woman, a teacher, and a feminist teaching a masculinized subject in a patriarchal system pretending to be already democratic.

Throughout our conversations, Lois and I grappled with questions of gender. Unlike my experiences with Wayne, Greg, and to some extent Denis, I had much less difficulty exploring questions of gender with Lois. Ultimately I realize that my ease and ability to really engage gender as a topic of conversation with Lois stems from being a woman in conversation with another woman who shared similar philosophies and approaches to

teaching. Even though I felt comfortable with the males in my study, and even though we also shared similar philosophies, I was reticent when it came to questions of gender. Partly I think I held back out of fear of being perceived as 'forcing an agenda.' But why should I fear such accusations when indeed there is an agenda at play and when that agenda has the potential to advance understandings and transform knowledge? I also believe that my reticence was in relation to subtle structures of power I had been bumping up against for much of life. For Grumet & Stone (2000), the terms male and female stand in "dominant and subordinate positions, respectively" (p. 186), and in my own research, the terms become bodies amidst swirling eddies of historically constructed inequities. Just as Lois struggled with her own identity in relation to the very real resistance of her students, I struggled with my own identity in relation to imagined resistances from Denis, Wayne and Greg, thus sacrificing some possibilities for understanding through our conversations. While I am left fatigued and troubled by my own failures, I also find within myself a renewed commitment to taking up questions of gender in social studies education.

Carol

Questions of Gender

As with Lois, Carol and I engaged in lengthy discussions of gender in social studies, and as with Lois, Carol spoke about an unsettling incident with a student in one of her grade ten social studies classes.

Carol: *I had a really negative experience with a student in class who was, and still to this day (he's in grade 12 now) has been quite outright, real sort of macho, sexist, you know and this sort of is what he wants to put out there – this is his attitude towards life. And we were dealing with something, I can't even remember what the context was, political parties, and you know, you have the poster on the board with all the prime ministers, it was something pretty innocuous that we were dealing with, and all of a sudden his voice goes up, and they were quietly working, and he makes a comment about, well yeah they were uh, referring to women, and I picked up enough to know that, they should know better then to get involved in politics. So it starts off with this and then progresses to well, that one, she had her chance to do something and look what she did, didn't even last. She couldn't run this country.*

At this point in our conversation, it was clear to me that Carol had been deeply effected by the comments that her student had made. My sense was that she not only felt

personally insulted by his denigration of women in politics, but that she felt she had failed to provide an environment free from sexism for the female students in her class.

Carol: *This sort of line of comments, around his little buddies who were kind of giggling and laughing and found it all rather amusing. I probably didn't handle it as well as I should have either because my hackles just went up. So it wasn't even a matter of, well you know what, this isn't even something you've presented in the context of let's take it up as a point of discussion. Are women totally useless in the political spectrum? Like I mean I wasn't even going to go down that road with him. Well I just took it as a personal, this is between you and me now. You're using my class as a forum to have a sexist discussion, which I will not tolerate. And it was a blow up thing and he packed up his books and out he went, storming out of the classroom. How dare you call me sexist. I said well what exactly, I mean these are not good examples, but it just shows the classroom does create this environment and how as a teacher and as a woman how angry I was. And this student did follow, and I said just go, he went to the office and he was going to complain about me for insinuating he was being a sexist. Well, I wasn't insinuating, I called him a sexist.*

Despite having occurred two-years prior, Carol's experience was still fresh in her mind. Interpreting the actions of her students as a personal attack speaks to the vulnerability that women teaching social studies may feel as they navigate a masculinized curriculum in a patriarchal society. The comments of her student were sexist, yet when Carol named them as such, she risked sanction by her administration if the student complained about her. Not only does this situation speak to the relations of power inherent in social studies classrooms as teachers struggle with student resistance, it speaks to the power relations inherent in an educational system that has not always been inclusive for female staff and students.

Gender situates social studies

The student's comments illustrate an attempt to divest the teacher of credibility by undermining women generally. He made an active choice to say what he said, perhaps because he felt threatened by Carol's approach to teaching, her strength as a woman, or any number of factors. His sexist comments about women in politics illustrate a gendered construction of citizenship in which women are perceived as non-citizens, not capable of productive political participation. His comments also **situate gender as a salient but often unspoken dynamic in social studies classrooms and curriculum**.

His comments likely established a gendered demarcation between teacher and student, student and student, potentially impacting future interactions with Carol.

I find it troubling but not necessarily surprising that these sorts of incidents still occur in social studies classrooms. Both Lois and Carol, the two women in this study, spoke of unsettling experiences with students related to gender, while the three men in the study did not. Carol suggested that the classroom created such an environment, but I would argue it is much more than the classroom. For a very long time gender has been used to justify and legitimate inclusion and exclusion, citizenship and non-citizenship (Arnot, 1997; Dillabough & Arnot, 2000; Lister, 1997, Pateman, 1988). It becomes a question of how social studies teachers, both male and female, make sense of gender in the day-to-day classroom interactions and learning that occurs. And also a question of how students make sense of and are made sense of by gender in social studies?

Gender lives as afterthought in social studies

In addition to the conversation we had about Carol's experience with her student, we spoke at length about the content of social studies curriculum as gendered. Carol noted that often gender is made marginal depending upon its inclusion in textbooks or curriculum. She spoke about the discrete, stand alone sections in social studies or the special sections or boxes in textbooks dedicated to women's experiences and contributions. She called this inclusion "chunking" and problematized it as further marginalizing gender even if the intent was otherwise.

Worth noting is that 'chunking' is often limited to women's experiences, so in this context, gender comes to mean female, rather than male and female as is so often the case (Scott, 1999). Issues of gender tend to focus on what is made absent or marginal in the curriculum, women's experiences, rather than troubling the gendered (read masculine) construction of knowledge permeating social studies content. Chunking creates a situation in which **gender lives as afterthought** in curricula, often added on at the end of a textbook chapter or the end of a curricular unit.

While Carol acknowledged the importance of including issues of gender in social studies, she questioned the manner of inclusion if students were learning that the lives and experiences of women exist in chunks outside of mainstream material, as if it were included as an afterthought. Like her integrative approach to active citizenship, Carol

believed in an integrative approach to gender as a means of valuing the lives and experiences of both women and men, and as a means of valuing male and female students. That said, Carol believed that gender had become almost a non-issue in social studies and worried about her own perceived inability to take it up in a meaningful way.

Carol: *I feel badly because I do feel it's such an area of lack in the curriculum that I don't have a lot of input to say unfortunately because it is almost a non-issue.*

Jennifer: *Even identifying that it is a "non-issue" is important.*

I feel it is necessary and important to point out that Carol did have a great deal of insight to offer on issues of gender throughout our conversations so it is interesting to me that she felt otherwise. We spoke about the dichotomy between public and private spaces in social studies curriculum, how women and men are shaped by economic systems that value paid work over unpaid work, how as women teachers we struggle with teaching a content that we do not see ourselves reflected in, and so on. Why would Carol suggest that she had little to say about gender? I can only speculate that her response reflects the tensions that she inhabits as a woman teaching a masculinized content that has become so normalized as to be virtually invisible. Yet, it is visible to Carol, so perhaps suggesting she had little to stay about gender was an attempt to reconcile her own position as a woman with much to say about gender to that of teacher of a subject that has little to say about gender, where gender exists as a "non-issue". Carol did not declare she had nothing to say about gender, just that she had little to say, and there is a difference.

Reflecting on Meanings

Gender is everywhere present in social studies even when it is silent or only superficially addressed. While Denis came to see gender as opening up new possibilities in social studies, he struggled with its inclusion. This suggests that the patriarchal nature of social studies curriculum has become so normalized that masculinized knowledge is almost uniformly accepted as truth (Sears, 2003). Abdi and Ghosh (2004) contend that "the worldview and experiences of the dominant group have been perceived to be universal knowledge and as representing the situation of all children" (p. 5). I support

this contention but also maintain that "universal knowledge" is inherently gendered. Students and teachers in social studies classrooms are situated by their gender, which in turn informs their interaction with the content of social studies. Lois' concern that her female students "checked out" for certain topics in social studies 30 reflects how gender operates as both a site of inclusion and exclusion in social studies (Stone, 1999). Nadine Dolby (2000) tells a tale of learning history in high school. The female students in her study assumed that women had made only minimal historical contributions since they learned little of women's historical contributions or perspectives in their classroom. While they desired to know more about what women were doing in the past, the young women accepted the exclusion of this narrative as not being part of what was really important. Thus, gender positioned their experiences learning history and constructed them as citizens much as it shaped my conversations with Wayne as I struggled to explore in meaningful ways, questions of gender in social studies.

Looking back on the process of coming to understanding, of giving birth to meaning, I am struck by the richness of each conversation and the insights that abounded in our many discussions. Each participant had much to say about questions of citizenship, culture and gender in social studies and their own teaching, and it is clear to me that the understandings that emerged through the research are certainly more than the recreation of my own meaning (Gadamer, 1987). Rather, they reflect the interplay of experiences and perspectives between myself and my participants and the negotiation of these experiences as we live within social studies. In the chapter that follows, I explore how the understandings and questions that emerged through the process of inquiry reflect both the possibilities and impossibilities of teaching social studies in diverse and complex spaces of learning. And I examine my own affinity for social studies given its impossibilities and my continued commitment to a subject that has often been a source of frustration and disappointment.

Chapter 8:
Nurturing Understandings

Earlier, I spoke about the experience of giving birth as one riddled with uncertainty and excitement, tension and possibility. Just as that experience was life altering for me, so too has been the experience of caring for my daughter and watching her grow. As I nurture her growth, I nurture my own growth as a first time parent. Each day there is something new to be learned and I am faced with all of the corresponding challenges that such learnings offer me as a mother. Parent, researcher, woman, teacher; I am all of these at once, and none of them alone. Engaging in this research has reminded me of the challenges of existing in multiple locations and of the need to attend to the multi-layered narratives of life (deVault, 1999; Smits, 1997).

Metaphor, as a discursive tool, creates spaces within the text that have the ability to "inform and enlighten" (Ricoeur, 1981, p. 172). Throughout this dissertation, I have used the metaphor of giving birth to illuminate the experience of uncovering meanings that my participants and I engaged in through our conversations. While none of us knew what to expect when we began to talk, we were committed to the process because of the possibilities it presented. I was drawn to the birthing metaphor because of its centrality in my own consciousness and because as a feminist knower, I wanted to bring something to my writing which honours women. It has not been my intent to allow the metaphor to take over the text of this discussion, nor has it been my intent to alienate readers who find their experiences outside of the metaphor. Rather, I have been drawn to the metaphor of giving birth as a vehicle through which I am better able to construct my own meanings and understandings, and to help make sense of the research as a whole, for as Ricoeur (1981) reminds us, meaning is not "something hidden but something disclosed" (p. 177).

Closely aligned with the metaphor of giving birth is the concept of nurturing, and in the context of this work, nurturing understanding. Nurturing understanding implies a certain commitment to growth, not necessarily linear, which tends to be caught up in the ages and stages we often associate with the growth of children. To nurture is to foster a more holistic growth. The body grows but so too does the mind and our ability to think critically and creatively, to broaden our own thinking, and to accept that understanding is

personal and complex, rooted in our own histories and consciousness. As the mind grows, so too must the heart grow, when understanding is infused with compassion and caring. Nurturing understanding requires a commitment to questioning and keeping questions of inquiry open. Similarly, cultivating understanding implies a commitment to growth, but often in the context of maturation. We cultivate crops to feed people and animals, expect that seeds will be planted, tended to and harvested. There is finality to cultivation despite, and perhaps even because of, the repetition of the cycle each year. Nurturing, however, lacks such finality. It is an infinite endeavour tied to our relationships with others and with our selves. Nussbaum (1997) suggests that "individuals can all too easily be forgotten when we engage in political debate" (p. 6) and uses the phrase "cultivating humanity" to describe people who are liberated from "the bondage of habit and custom" who are able to "function with sensitivity and alertness as citizens of the whole world" (p.8). Citizens who "cultivate their humanity" suggests Nussbaum, are connected to others not simply as citizens but as human beings "bound to all other human beings by recognition and concern" (p. 10). Thus Nussbaum attempts to open up understandings of citizenship within liberal democratic spaces by speaking of the inherent need to "cultivate humanity".

Like Nussbaum, I see a distinctive relationship between citizenship and humanity. I also believe, that despite the apparent inter-changeability of the terms cultivate and nurture in educational discourse, they have disparate meanings. Not only do we need to "cultivate humanity" in our discussions of citizenship and education, we need to nurture humanity. Growth and understanding must not be final; "sensitivity and alertness" must be continually tended to in light of the complex and changing nature of people, their relationships to each other as human beings and to the world. There is a tendency in education and in social studies curriculum to forget about nurturing humanity, particularly when the focus is on high stakes testing and assessment, and when differences amongst students are discounted or rendered invisible by curriculum documents, common exams and the standardization of education (Vinson, 2001). Where is humanity in the face of such practices? If, as Nussbaum suggests, we are able to cultivate humanity through critical self-examination, a sense of global belonging, and the narrative imagination, then surely we can continually nurture these ways of being in an effort to dispel the potential complacency of citizenship.

In Chapter Four of this dissertation, I discussed Jardine's (2000) concern regarding the consequences of neutering understanding and closing the questions of inquiry. I share his concern. It has been my intent throughout this research to keep open the questions of inquiry in an effort to cultivate and nurture understandings of citizenship, culture and gender and what it means to teach social studies. The understandings that have emerged through my conversations with Denis, Wayne, Greg, Lois and Carol represent multi-layered narratives of teaching social studies. These narratives are illustrative of the spaces of tension that each participant inhabited as he or she imagined the possibilities or ideals of teaching social studies while living within the everyday realities and challenges of social studies curriculum and classrooms.

I have encountered my own struggles with understanding as I read, and reread the texts of our conversations, and been surprised by the opening up of meanings in ways I could not have anticipated prior to embarking on this research (Ellis, 1993). The purpose of this chapter is to tend to the understandings that emerged in Chapters 5, 6 and 7, while at the same time considering my own relationship with the research. It entails honouring the experiences of my participants that opened up ways of thinking about and questioning citizenship, culture and gender. It also requires an engagement with the tensions and uncertainties that each participant experienced as a result of the complexities of teaching and their own historical locations as teachers.

At this point, it is useful to return to the notion of the hermeneutic circle, a reminder that understanding, like a circle, is interminable. It has no end, no beginning, no middle, it is always everywhere in process. So while this chapter may be the last of my dissertation, it should not be read as a final answer to the "question" of citizenship education in the social studies curriculum. Instead, it should be read as a continued attempt to explore the understandings that emerged in the spaces of conversation.

As a parent, I suspect I will always be inclined to nurture my daughter, even when she is grown up, for the job of being a parent is never done. She will not magically, one day, cease to be in need of my attention or my care. In many ways, the relationship I have with my daughter Ayla will always be in process, just as the relationship I have with my own parents, my own understandings of the world and of social studies education will always be in process. Just as the relationship my participants have with their own

understandings and questions of citizenship, culture, gender and the teaching of social studies will probably always be in process. Since the question of teaching citizenship can never be settled, it is essential that the tensionality of trying to teach citizenship be acknowledged and embraced in the lives of teachers and the five participants in my study. What follows is my attempt to honour and give voice to the tensions that Lois, Carol, Denis, Wayne and Greg all experienced in their own lives as teachers.

The Circle of Understanding

Some circles nourish,
Other circles destroy.
The circle of fifths
Is the cornerstone
Of much of the world's music.
The cycle of poverty
Excludes whole populations
From the necessities of life.
Time itself is cyclical,
Spiralling through aeons
And galaxies
Seemingly without end;
Yet as each season rolls around,
We are all a little wiser,
None of us is unchanged.

(from *Woman Song Woman Prayer*, Miriam Winters)

The hermeneutic circle of understanding provides an opportunity to evolve and grow through the inquiry (Elllis, 1998; Jardine, 1992; Palmer, 1969). Neither my participants nor I think about teaching social studies the same way as when we first began this study. I hope that I am a little wiser having engaged in this research. I know that I am changed. The hermeneutic circle nourishes, it fosters growth rather than stagnation; it is one of the cornerstones of my research, a project that has attempted to value the voices and experiences of teachers. The hermeneutic circle has led me to a new place of understanding, one that is fluid, filled with possibilities along with tensions and uncertainties. It is from the tensions and ambiguities we dwell within that understanding emerges, and I want to turn now to these places that the teachers in my study occupy as they negotiate the prescribed curriculum of social studies and their own locations as individuals in the midst of it.

Citizenship and the Tensions of Teaching

Reflecting on my conversations with Denis, Wayne, Greg, Lois and Carol particularly in relation to questions of citizenship, it became clear that each of these individuals lived with tension that arose in relation to what they imagined as the possibilities or ideals of teaching for citizenship and what they perceived as the impossibilities or the real of teaching for citizenship in social studies. Without exception, they all spoke about social studies as offering spaces for engaging students in meaningful learning. They also saw the social studies curriculum, particularly the current events component, as a vehicle through which students might connect with the world beyond the classroom in genuine ways. Yet at the same time, each of the teachers faced the realities of teaching a content heavy, Eurocentric curriculum within a prescribed amount of time, and depending upon the grade level, preparing students to write either a provincial diploma examination or a common final exam.

In many cases, the teachers often found themselves having to abandon the possibilities of working towards genuinely engaged, thoughtful and embodied citizenship in favour of a disengaged, mechanistic and disembodied citizenship that would allow all students, regardless of their gender, culture or other differences to get through the course and pass the final exam. In this context, students become responsible citizens only insofar as they are able to pass the exam and the course and teachers become responsible citizens only insofar as their students succeed. For students and teachers, individual differences tend to disappear since universalist principles inform standardized testing. Students are regarded as a collective of bodies who will write a common exam, rather than as individual human beings always in the process of becoming. The curricular and pedagogical choices that teachers make are constructed partly by universalist principles, particularly when so much seems to ride on exam results as my research participants so aptly pointed out. In this way, social studies contributes to the creation of what Arnot (1997) refers to as "the abstracted individual" (p. 282), what Cary (2001) refers to as a normative construction of the "good citizen" (p. 427), and what Sears and Perry (2000) refer to as "sterile" citizenship education (p. 30).

So, for these teachers with whom I entered into conversation, the difficulty lay in navigating the possibilities that social studies offered for fostering a deeper form of citizenship while at the same time negotiating the constraints of a fixed curriculum,

common examinations and accountability for student results. Hermeneutically speaking, such difficulties may be understood as aporias, those which perplex or trouble (Smits, 1997), essential difficulties that we may never get over and come to accept as part of life. The aporia of citizenship in social studies exists in the messiness that teachers find themselves in on a daily basis as they negotiate the prescribed curriculum. Greg, Denis, Lois, Carol and Wayne were all able to express a broader vision of citizenship than that which they felt the curriculum fostered. But each of them also spoke of the difficulty of having a vision or an ideal and realizing the transformative potential of such an ideal in classroom practice and, subsequently, for the students in the classroom.

Denis saw the possibility of conceptualizing citizenship beyond political and public spaces. He spoke of the importance of the family in citizenship education, but was troubled with how to incorporate this into his social studies lessons. Each participant struggled in similar ways with her or his own understandings of citizenship. Yet no one was willing to concede entirely to the curricular definition of citizenship. For me, this speaks to the persistent possibility of opening up understandings of citizenship in social studies, moving beyond the falsely universalistic principles upon which it is structured, freeing it from the confines of the curriculum and of public spaces by continually constructing it as we live it in multiple and varied ways, in multiple and varied locations. For social studies teachers, the persistent possibility of opening up understandings of citizenship means that we do not have to accept the final answer of citizenship. While this may seem in tension with the prescribed curriculum, it is a productive tension precisely because understanding remains open. It is for this reason that I have been drawn to social studies education, despite its shortcomings. While the curriculum may be overly prescriptive in terms of content, there is room for individual teachers to approach it in more equitable and open ways and work with students to always be questioning what they are learning and what they think they know.

Culture and the Tensions of Teaching

Walter Feinberg (1998) writes that

> Culture provides the conditions for learning and makes learning possible, but at the same time that it facilitates some kinds of understandings it makes others more difficult…Culture stands as the system of meaning that enables individuals to make sense of their own and others' experiences (pp. 64-65).

In social studies, culture operates at a curricular level to create the conditions of learning and certain understandings. For example, even though Denis worried that Francophone culture was not adequately represented in the Alberta Program of Studies he still supported the standardization of final learning outcomes for all students. The tensions of culture for Denis were apparent in this contradiction of knowledge and suggest that, as Feinberg notes, culture, and in this case the dominant Anglo culture, stands as the system of meaning in social studies.

The aporia of culture in the social studies curriculum was apparent in the conversations with all five participants. Each acknowledged that the curriculum tended to promote a dominant cultural viewpoint at the expense of other cultural voices. The "deeply rooted legacies of ethnocentrism and racism that denigrate the value of minority cultures" (Kymlicka, 2004, p. xiii) became one of the impossibilities of teaching social studies that my participants grappled with. More often then not, the consensus seemed to be that it was up to the individual teacher to address cultural inequities in the curriculum. But how might this be done when teachers themselves may have limited understandings of cultures beyond the dominant one? And what is the likelihood that this will occur given the realities of high stakes testing? For me, our exploration of the questions of culture led to an awareness of the inadequacy of my own pre-understandings. Recognizing the existence of cultural inequities (and gender inequities) in social studies curriculum does not necessarily solicit a dramatic change in teaching. In fact, such shifts can be quite dangerous for teachers, dangerous in terms of teachers' own relationship with cultural knowledge, deviating from mandated curriculum, meeting resistance and hostility from students and not knowing how to proceed in genuine ways.

This is one of the difficulties of teaching social studies, particularly when content is not reflective of the diversity of cultural experiences. It is as Garrison (1996) suggests, a situation in which "cultural traditions have us before we have them" (p. 433). Similarly, Leonardo (2003) notes "pedagogically speaking a teacher belongs to a history before she can reflect on her conditions" (p. 332). For social studies educators beginning to teach, the culture of the curriculum has them before they have it. Certainly this seemed to be the case for Denis, Wayne, Greg, Lois and Carol. They are required to teach a mandated curriculum and as a result, culture appears always in danger of living on the edge of understanding in social studies. Yet at the same time these teachers did not

unquestioningly accept the dominant cultural narrative implicit in the curriculum and at times attempted to subtly and not so subtly subvert it in small but meaningful ways. In so doing they exercised agency in relation to the curriculum in an effort to move beyond what they perceived as the impossibilities of teaching the social studies.

Gender and the Tensions of Teaching

Perhaps one of the more surprising understandings that emerged through the texts of the conversations was related to the gendered location of teaching social studies. Both Carol and Lois spoke about experiences with students that were troubling on many levels, but seemed to be most troubling on the level of gender. Lois talked about being "accused" by a student of promoting a feminist agenda, and Carol spoke about an incident with a student resulting from sexist comments he had made in class. While each of these women identified themselves as feminists, they also indicated that they did not feel they were promoting any agenda other than one of equity in the classroom. Still they were met with hostility from male students in their classrooms. The resistance to knowledge from some of the male students in Lois' and Carol's classrooms reflects the deep traditions of knowledge in social studies curriculum. Whether or not they intended it, the way Lois and Carol approached certain topics in classroom discussion awoke certain students by confronting such traditions and their own historically effected consciousness (Nussbaum, 1997).

Using feminism as a critical hermeneutic reminds me of the importance of tending to the silences in research, of interpreting these silences as a part of understanding, and of carefully listening for what remains unsaid. Lois and Carol verbalized experiences as feminist teachers, but what they did not speak about were the feelings that arose in light of these experiences. Lois was pragmatic, suggesting that her response to the student was acceptable and reflected no "feminist agenda". Carol, too, was utilitarian in her response to the situation, removing the student from the class and speaking with one of her administrators. On one level the experiences were important enough to be brought up in conversation, but on another level, neither woman discussed the feelings that their respective experiences evoked on a deeper, more personal level. Gender bias, states Bernard-Powers (2001) is "part of the fabric of our society and of student's lives" (p.190) and, I would argue, part of the fabric of teachers' lives, in this case women teaching in secondary social studies classrooms. Lois and Carol experienced gender bias in a very

real way and their stories are examples of the multi-layered narratives of teaching. On the surface are the challenges to Carol and Lois, teachers perceived as feminist, and their identifiable responses to the challenges. Lingering below the surface are the as yet unspoken tensions these women experienced as they encountered and navigated resistance from male students in their classrooms.

Initially I was surprised that neither Lois nor Carol spoke about their own feelings associated with their respective experiences. They kept their discussions of the events matter-of-fact and I was left wondering what emotions were evoked for these women as they experienced resistance and animosity from male students. Upon reflection however, I believe that there are risks associated with voicing such feelings. Given the masculinized nature of social studies curriculum and the continued emphasis on rationality, the articulation of emotion may make these women more vulnerable in their own eyes in relation to their students and to the curriculum. Thus, suppressing their feelings allows Carol and Lois to step outside of the incidents, separating themselves to some extent from the students. In turn, this separation protects the two women from emotional trauma. It allows them to continue with the task at hand – teaching the curriculum to students.

My conversations with Carol and Lois also revealed ways of speaking about citizenship and social studies differently from the men in this study. While Greg, Wayne and Denis spoke about the importance of awareness in citizenship education, Lois and Carol spoke about citizenship as understanding. There exists a fundamental difference between the concept of awareness and the concept of understanding. Awareness suggests having perception or knowledge of something, while understanding suggests not only knowledge of something, but the ability to apply judgement to that knowledge. Thus, understanding in the context of citizenship education speaks of a desire to move students away from simply knowing about something toward embodying that knowledge, making judgements about it and possibly even acting on those judgements. Further, Lois felt strongly that citizenship entailed service to others and that 'being' citizens required being, care and compassion for us and for others.

The language that Lois, and to some extent Carol, used to espouse a vision of citizenship was a much more embodied language than Wayne, Denis, or Greg used.

They tended to speak about citizenship in more abstract ways, beyond the realm of the body and of the individual. My concern is that when citizenship is understood in abstract ways, it becomes careless. By this I do not mean reckless. What I mean is that careless citizenship is citizenship without care, care for others and care for the world in which we live. It is easier to divest our selves of the need for care and compassion when citizenship exists as an abstraction, divorced from day-to-day relationships and meaningful connections with people. The Alberta Program of Studies (2000), with its emphasis on responsible and rational citizenship operates as site of careless citizenship in situations that fail to encourage students to consider the curriculum in considerate ways. Like children whose emotional development is neglected by uncaring parents, the goals of citizenship embedded in the social studies curriculum neglect the significance of emotion and care in lives of students and teachers (Noddings, 2001; Nussbaum, 2001).

Like Carol and Lois, I have experienced gender as a tension in both teaching and research. The stories I shared in Chapter 1 are illustrative of this tension, much as my ability to meaningfully explore issues of gender with Wayne, Greg, and Denis seemed to be hampered by my own location as a woman speaking with men about a potentially difficult and uncomfortable topic. This is my "crisis of quietism" (Britzman, 2003). If, as Lather (1992) suggests, feminist research is concerned with the politics of knowing and being known then I must consider not only how I know my participants, but how I know myself as a woman, a mother, an academic, and a researcher. It is not an easy process, but it is a necessary one particularly as it relates to the process of coming to understanding, of giving birth to meaning.

Gender remains salient in research, quietly operating in intricate relations of power that seem to inhibit possibilities for knowing, while at the same time creating possibilities for knowing beyond that which was imagined. While who we are informs how we think (Smith, 1991), it also informs how we approach our research. In this case, my sense of myself as a feminist caused me to exercise caution in my conversations with Gary, Denis, and Greg even when I imagined that I was not. It was only after I read and re-read the texts of our conversations several times that I came to an awareness of how gender operated in these contexts. Now I appreciate more fully how gender informs our identities within traditions of knowledge and how it exists as both sites of possibility and impossibility in research. Possibility insofar as it opens up spaces of understanding and

questions of inquiry, and impossibility insofar as these very spaces are shut down despite attempts to keep them open.

Continuing to Nurture Understanding

> Only by recognizing the various obstacles and opacities which the project of understanding encounters, and by thus resisting the facile solution of some absolute synthesis of knowledge which would contrive to resolve prematurely the conflict of interpretations, can we achieve an authentic grasp of the role of human creativity and imagination in spite of all the odds (Ricoeur, 1984, p.16).

What I have learned from the process of this research is the circular nature of the project of understanding. And by this I do not mean that understanding has come full circle and we are precisely at the point from which we began. Rather, the project of understanding is circular in that it has no end, no beginning, no middle; it is always in motion. Jardine (1998) for example indicates that understanding is something we're already always involved in. For the teachers involved in this project and for me, understanding what it means to teach social studies, considering what is questionable about citizenship, culture, and gender in the teaching of social studies does not lead us to "an absolute synthesis of knowledge". Instead, it continues us toward the process of "mutual challenging, questioning, and learning" (Behabib, 2002, p. 25).

Citizenship, like the multiple and shifting nature of individual identities (Lister, 1997), is a concept that we should avoid restricting to a single definition or understanding. None of my participants understood citizenship in a limited or static manner even when they struggled to articulate their understandings of it. Keeping the questions of inquiry open created spaces for the presence of the hermeneutic imagination to generate and revitalize "the question of how we can go on together in the midst of constraints and difficulties that constantly threaten to foreclose on the future" (Smith, 1991, p. 189).

Perhaps the spaces of tension we live in with respect to social studies education suggest that it is time to rethink both the curriculum and the concept of citizenship as its central goal. If, as I indicated in Chapter 2, citizenship is amorphous, imbued with multiple meanings, but in social studies inherently gendered and falsely universalized, then perhaps it is an outmoded goal of education. One possibility, as Noddings (2004) has suggested, is that caring rather than citizenship be the cornerstone of education. Another possibility is that rather than educating "good citizens", we educate

compassionate, embodied individuals who accept the inter-connectivity of lives and of people, locally, nationally and globally (Nussbaum, 1997). Noddings approach however falls into the trap of privileging one construct at the expense of another, further reinforcing curricular dichotomies which themselves tend to foster inequity. Nussbaum's approach, her notion of cultivating humanity, while offering a broader vision for citizenship does so within the confines of liberal democracy. Thus, it is limited by the very tradition that has constructed citizenship as falsely universal in relation to the Nation through a discourse of rights and duties. Yet another possibility, and one I am more inclined to embrace given the hermeneutic orientation of this research, is to cultivate and nurture the open spaces of citizenship in social studies, which in turn will encourage teachers to embrace the aporias of citizenship so that their teaching is forever filled with persistent possibility.

Lois, Carol, Denis, Wayne and Greg all expressed that their own ways of thinking were affected through our conversations. While they had a heightened sense of the tensionality of teaching, they also seemed more open to the possibilities of teaching social studies despite, and perhaps because of, its challenges and frustrations. I cannot say for certain if their pedagogy changed when they returned to their classrooms, but that was not the purpose of this research in the first place. What I can offer is that I believe each of these teachers returned to the classroom with a sense that rather than seeking answers to the questions we explored together over the course of the research they might embrace the open space of citizenship in their own teaching, constructing it as it is lived in the classroom and in conversation with students. This dissertation began with a questioning of social studies, of citizenship, culture and gender and an exploration of the hermeneutic and feminist possibilities of opening up understandings. Through my own experiences with social studies and the experiences of my teacher participants, I am left with as many questions as when I began. But I also recognize the power of interpreting our own experiences as educators and the importance of being in a continual search for meaning. To return to the experiences of giving birth, you never know what to expect, you cannot anticipate the pain and discomfort of the process, but you know that you will be inextricably changed by it, and that the end result is but one part of a journey of a lifetime.

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